The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement

A Short Study of the life of

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

by

Maulana Muhammad Ali

New Edition, edited by

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Preface

This book on the life of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad by Maulana Muhammad Ali was first published in 1937. It was an expansion by him of his earlier short work published in 1918 as the first tract in a series entitled *The Ahmadiyya Movement: 1 – The Founder.* This tract was itself partly based on an article written by Maulana Muhammad Ali in the *Review of Religions* in 1906 during the life of the Founder. This was the monthly English periodical of the Ahmadiyya Movement, of which the Maulana was Editor at the time.

As this concise book was found to be of great utility, a new edition was produced in 1984, re-typeset in the U.K. and published from the U.S.A. In that edition I added a Foreword covering the topic of the close association between Maulana Muhammad Ali and Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad during the last eight years of the latter's life. A small appendix was also added citing the opinions of some later Western scholars of Islam on the Founder and his Movement. This supplemented extracts from earlier such scholars quoted by the author in the 1937 publication. In the presentation of the 1984 edition, major and minor subheadings were introduced within the body of the book, being based on the running page headlines used in the 1937 edition.

It is with great pleasure that this new edition is now presented on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, in an entirely re-typeset, redesigned form. The original 1918 short treatise by the author contained some details which were not included in

the expanded book of 1937. In preparing this edition I have incorporated some of that extra information by inserting, at appropriate points, some extracts from the 1918 booklet, with minor editing of the text. Appendix 1 has been added consisting of some obituaries of the Founder that appeared in the Muslim press at the time of his death. The opinions of later Western writers, from the 1984 edition, are now in Appendix 2. The treatment of the association between the biographer and his subject has been moved to form Appendix 3. An Index has also been added in this edition.

Quotations and citations given by the Maulana have been checked as far as possible, and where necessary the reference is now indicated more precisely. In a few cases, some further quotations have been added to supplement those included by the Maulana.

As I wrote in the Foreword to the 1984 edition, it is a terrible tragedy that the life and teachings of this great Muslim Reformer and thinker have been misunderstood and misrepresented beyond all reasonable limits. It is extremely fortunate, therefore, that Maulana Muhammad Ali recorded this concise biography of his master which is highly authoritative, not only because of the Maulana's worldwide reputation as a scholar of the highest calibre and integrity, but also because he was a close associate of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in the last eight years of the Founder's life, living and working closely with him in Qadian as one of the most prominent men in the Movement. Please refer to Appendix 3 for further details.

No doubt Maulana Muhammad Ali, with his direct knowledge and experiences, was in a unique position of authority to give an accurate and authentic account of the life, mission and teachings of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Zahid Aziz, Dr.
January 2008

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Photograph of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

1. The First Forty Years

Family history

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, was born at Qadian, a village in the Gurdaspur District, Punjab, in 1836.[1] His father's name was Mirza Ghulam Murtaza, and the family is descended from the Barlas tribe [2] of the Moghul family. His ancestors had long resided in Khurasan, a province of Persia, and were the dignitaries of the land. In the tenth century of the *Hijra,* when Babar ruled India, one of his ancestors, Mirza Hadi Beg, emigrated from Persia, most probably on account of some family dissensions, and with

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1. In the first edition of this book, 1839 was given as the date, and this is also the date given by the founder himself in the short autobiography which he wrote in 1897 and which appeared in his book *Kitab-ul-Bariyya*. This was, however, a guess, as there is no written record of the exact date of his birth. Further on in this same autobiography, he states that he passed nearly forty years of his life with his father, whose death took place in 1876. On this basis, 1837 or 1836 would appear to be a more probable date. His son, Mirza Bashir Ahmad, has produced strong arguments in favour of 1836 as the year of his father's birth. (*Editor's Note:* Further research has shown that the date of the Founder's birth was most probably 13 February 1835.)

2. This tribe was descended from Haji Barlas. He lived at Kush, to the south of Samarqand, but was expelled from there by Taimur when he conquered that land. Haji Barlas took shelter in Khurasan, and the family lived there till they came over to India, in the time of Babar. On account of their long residence in Persia, the Barlas tribe may be included among the Persians. Some authorities, however, say that Barlas is not a Moghul but a Persian tribe, as both *Barlas* and *Mirza* (the sur-title) are words of Persian and not of Turkish origin. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad himself says that his ancestors were Persians.

his family and about two hundred attendants sought refuge in India. Settling in a vast and fertile sub-Himalayan plain, called the Majjha, he there built a village, about 70 miles from Lahore in a north-easterly direction, and called it Islampur. The ruling monarch granted him a vast tract of land as a *jagir* with the right to exercise the powers of a *Qaḍi* (*lit*., a *magistrate*) or chief executive authority. Hence, Islampur became known as Islampur Qadi Majjhi, ultimately shortened to Qadi, and at last became known as Qadian.[3]

In the latter days of the Moghul Empire when it was undergoing the process of dissolution, the *jagir* granted to the ancestors of Ahmad[4] became an independent state. In the early days of the Sikh rule, when anarchy and oppression were the order of the day and Islam and the Muslims were being persecuted everywhere, Qadian remained for a long time the centre of peace and prosperity. Mirza Gul Muhammad, the great-grandfather of Ahmad, was then the head of the family and, after the manner of the good Oriental chiefs, his purse was open for the learned and his table ministered freely to the poor and to the strangers. He had only eighty-five villages in his possession but, on account of his great love for piety and learning, many of the learned men who could not find shelter elsewhere felt assured of a warm reception at Qadian.

After the death of Mirza Gul Muhammad, his son, Mirza Ata Muhammad, became the chief, but he was soon

3. The name *Kad'a,* which is only another form of *Qadi* or *Kadi,* is mentioned in a hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the place of the appearance of Mahdi (*Jawahir-ul-Asrar,* p. 55).

4. The shortened name Ahmad is adopted instead of the full name Mirza Ghulam Ahmad for the sake of brevity. This is the name which he adopted in taking *bai'at* (oath of fealty), though in all his letters and writings he used his full name. In his revelations, both the long and the shortened forms occur; the following reason for this is from his own pen: "In the sense of being a *buruz* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (one who manifests or represents the Holy Prophet's mission in the world), I was called Ahmad, though my name was Ghulam Ahmad" (*Tazkirat-ush-Shahadatain,* p. 43).

overpowered by the Sikhs, who seized village after village until not a single village, except Qadian, was left in his possession. This place was strongly fortified, but a body of Sikhs, called Ram Garhis, made an entry into the town under false pretences and took possession of the village. Mirza Ata Muhammad and his whole family were made prisoners and deprived of their possessions. Their houses and the mosques were made desolate, and the library was burned to the ground. After inflicting all kinds of torture, the Sikhs ordered the family to leave the village of Qadian. Thus, expelled from their home, they sought shelter in another state, where Ata Muhammad was poisoned by his enemies.

In the latter days of Ranjit Singh's ascendancy, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza obtained five villages from the *jagir* of his ancestors and re-settled at Qadian. Below is reproduced the opening paragraph of Sir Lepel Griffin's account of the family, published in the *Punjab Chiefs*:

> "In 1530, the last year of the Emperor Babar's reign, Hadi Beg, a Mughal of Samarqand, emigrated to the Punjab and settled in Gurdaspur District. He was a man of some learning, and was appointed Kazi or Magistrate over seventy villages in the neighbourhood of Kadian, which town he is said to have founded, naming it Islampur Kazi, from which Kadian has by a natural change arisen. For several generations the family has held offices of respectability under the Imperial Government, and it was only when the Sikhs became powerful that it fell into poverty."

The Sikh anarchy was, soon after Ahmad's birth, replaced by the peace and security of the British rule, and the Punjab Muslims once more breathed freely. The family naturally welcomed the change, and Mirza Ghulam Murtaza showed his staunch loyalty to the British rule in the Mutiny of 1857. In recognition of his services, he received a handsome pension and was highly esteemed by the officials.

Ahmad's own impressions of the Sikh misrule and the persecution of Muslims were deep-seated, and he always spoke of the coming of the British as a blessing and as saving the Punjab Muslims from slavery and annihilation. It is for this matter-of-fact statement, which finds frequent expression in his writings, that he has been criticised by a certain school of politicians who, therefore, regard him as favouring an alien government.

Education

In his childhood, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad received his education at home. He learned the Holy Quran and some Persian books from a tutor, named Fazl Ilahi, and later on some books on Arabic grammar from another tutor, named Fazl Ahmad. When he was seventeen or eighteen years old, a third tutor, Gul Ali Shah, was employed to teach him the ordinary Arabic textbooks of those days. He also studied some works on medicine from his father who was a famous physician in his time.

Righteous and God-fearing

From his early days, Ahmad had studious habits and he loved to remain in seclusion with his books. His father was, on that account, very anxious about him and repeatedly asked him to leave his seclusion and books for the more practical business of life, by which he meant that he should assist him in carrying out the plans which he was conceiving for the recovery of his lost estate. Such worldly occupations were hateful to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and he cared nothing for the restoration of the lost dignity and honour of the family. In obedience to his father's wishes, however, he did whatever was required of him. At one time he was compelled to accept Government service at Sialkot, where he passed four years of his life, 1864–1868. His experience in this line of life made upon his heart a deep impression of the degeneracy of those with whom he came in contact in that sphere of action, and therefore he did not mix with them. When his day's work was finished, he would go

straight to his residence and bury himself in the pages of his books. Only those who were interested in religion, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, sought his company. It was there that he came in contact with some Christian missionaries, with whom he had conversations on religious topics. Speaking of those days, Maulvi Sirajuddin, the father of Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan, who is one of the greatest opponents of the Ahmadiyya movement, wrote in his paper, the *Zamindar*:

> "Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a clerk in Sialkot about the year 1860 or 1861. His age was then about 22 to 23 years. We can say as an eye-witness that, even in the prime of youth, he was a very righteous and God-fearing man. After finishing his official work, he spent the whole of his time in the study of religious works. He mingled very little with others." [5]

So deep was the impression made upon Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan's father by Ahmad's piety and learning that he paid him a visit at Qadian, later in 1877. His impression then, to which he subsequently gave expression as editor of the *Zamindar* in his obituary, was still the same:

> "In 1877, we had the honour of passing one night as his [Ahmad's] guest. In those days, too, he was so deeply devoted to Divine worship and religious study that he did not talk much even with his guests."

Even at that early age in Sialkot he astonished those who listened to him with the power and clarity with which he expounded religious truths and supported the cause of Islam. Even some Christian missionaries used to listen to his conversation with rapt attention, so great was the attraction of his words.

5. The date of service in Sialkot is wrong. He joined the service in 1864. (*Editor's Note:* This and the following extract is from the obituary of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in *Zamindar,* 8 June 1908. A longer extract from this obituary is given in Appendix 1 of this edition.)

At last, his father recalled him from Government service, and he was, for a time, again required to carry on the law-suits relating to his father's estate, but the task was extremely repugnant to him. His father's failures in the attempts he made to recover his family lands, and the great grief which gnawed his soul ever afterwards on that account, made a deep impression on Ahmad's mind, and all these incidents made worldly attractions weaker and weaker for him everyday. Mirza Ghulam Murtaza had still some villages and besides that received an annual gratuity and a handsome pension, but the failures and reverses he had met preyed upon his mind and he was always in great grief. These circumstances convinced him at last that the course which his son followed was the only way that could lead to true happiness. He ultimately saw the vanity of life, and some six months before his death he built a mosque in the centre of town and directed that he should be buried in the yard of the mosque.

Even while obeying the orders of his father to pursue law-suits, Ahmad devoted a part of his time to the refutation of Christian attacks on Islam. The town of Batala, about eleven miles from Qadian, was an important Christian missionary centre. He frequented the place in connection with the affairs of the estate, and it pained him to see how Christian propaganda, unrefuted as it was, misled ignorant Muslims. The Batala Muslims, when hard-pressed by Christian missionaries, would come to Qadian to seek his help, and he sent them back well-armed to meet the situation.

Father's death

Mirza Ghulam Murtaza died in June 1876. The following account of his death is from his son's pen:

> "I was told in a vision that the time of my father's death had drawn nigh. At the time that I saw this vision, I was at Lahore. I made haste to reach Qadian and found him very ill, but I never thought that he would die so soon, for the disease had abated to an

appreciable degree. The next day we were all sitting by his bedside when, at noon, he told me to rest for a while, for it was the month of June and the heat was excessive. When I lay down for rest, I received the following revelation: 'By heaven and by the accident which shall befall after sunset'. I was given to understand that this revelation was a kind of condolence from the Almighty, and that the accident which was to befall was no other than the death of my father… When I received this revelation foretelling the death of my father, human weakness made me think that, since some of the sources of the income of our family would cease with my father's death, we might be put in trouble. No sooner had the idea passed into my mind than I received a second revelation saying: 'Is God not sufficient for His servant?' This revelation brought tranquillity and satisfaction to my mind, and went into my heart like a nail of iron. I call the Lord to witness that He brought the fulfilment of the joyful news contained in this revelation in a wonderful manner… My father died that very day after sunset, and it was the first day in my life that I saw such a sign of mercy from God.[6] … Thus I passed about forty years of my life under my father. His passing away from this life marked the dawn of a new era for me, and I began to receive Divine revelations incessantly. I cannot say what deed of mine drew this grace of God to me, but I feel that my mind had a natural attraction for faithfulness to God which no power in the world could alienate." [7]

6. This refers to the consoling revelation which he had received.

7. *Kitab-ul-Bariyya,* footnote, pages 174–178.

2. Religious Dedication

Love for the Holy Quran

As he himself says, at the age of forty, a new era thus dawned upon Ahmad, and he began to receive Divine revelations. His father's death brought about a radical change in his life, and his religious tendencies began to assume a more definite form. There was no longer any pressure put upon him to give himself up to worldly pursuits, and the whole of his time was from then onwards devoted to the study of the Holy Quran and other Islamic literature. He was undoubtedly leading a deeply religious life, but it had taken a quite different course from that which religious devotion normally followed in those days. Many schools of the Muslim Sufis require their votaries to undergo various forms of devotional exercises, of which no indication is found in the practice of the Holy Prophet. Ahmad belonged to none of these schools and he never practised such innovations. In fact, from his early life, he hated all ascetic practices which were opposed to the word and the spirit of the Holy Quran. His only devotional exercise was the study of the Holy Quran in solitude. For days and months, he would continue studying the Holy Book, and so great was his love for it that those who saw him were convinced that he was never tired of reading it. His son, Mirza Sultan Ahmad, who was then a young man of about twenty-five years, bears witness to this in the following words:

> "He had a copy of the Holy Quran which he was continually reading and marking. I can say without

> exaggeration that he might have read it ten thousand times." [1]

Divine visions

On one occasion, he saw a vision in which an old man appeared to him saying that, according to the law of prophethood, fasting was a necessary preparation for receiving Divine light. On the basis of this vision, he kept fasts for a period of eight or nine months, reducing his food during that time to two or three morsels. Nevertheless, he did it privately so as to keep the fact concealed from his nearest relatives, and made special arrangements for the disposal of the food which he received regularly. This long fasting, however, had no injurious effect upon his health. On the other hand, he saw many wonderful visions relating to the future, some of which were later on published in *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, his first great work. The fulfilment, years afterwards, of the prophecies contained in them showed that they were actual revelations from God and not the hallucinations of a diseased brain.

Anti-Islamic Christian literature

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was, however, no mere visionary. From his early life, he was a student not only of Islam but also of comparative religion. He himself says:

> "I have been studying Christian literature from the early age of sixteen or seventeen, and have been pondering over Christian objections. I collected all those objections which the Christians advance against our Holy Prophet[2]… Their number is about three thousand. God is a witness and none greater than He can be produced as a witness that, as I have just said, I

1. This copy of the Holy Quran is now in the possession of the author, and on it, in Ahmad's own handwriting, are numbered the Divine commandments and prohibitions in the Holy Quran.

2. This collection was accidentally burned later in the life-time of Ahmad.

> have been studying Christian literature from the time when I was sixteen or seventeen years old, but not for a moment have those objections made any impression on me, or created any doubt in my mind, and this is simply due to the grace of God."

Christianity necessarily attracted his attention first, as that was the only foe of Islam in his early days. We have seen that, during his stay at Sialkot, he had discussions with Christian missionaries about the comparative merits of Islam and Christianity. Returning to Qadian after four years, he actively refuted the anti-Islamic propaganda of Christianity, whose centre was Batala. In fact, Christian propaganda against Islam was most active, and at the same time, most scurrilous, during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, being a devoted student of religion, closely studied that literature, and his heart ached at the way in which the holiest of men was being maligned and abused. By producing this abusive literature, the aim of Christianity was to engender, in Muslim hearts, hatred for the Holy Founder of Islam. In fact, with its numerous bands of missionaries insinuating themselves into every nook and corner of the Muslim world, and with heaps of abusive literature distributed freely among the Muslims, Christianity was challenging the very existence of Islam, and Ahmad, whose heart was full of the deepest conviction of Islamic truth, took up the challenge in real earnest. He started to write against the aggressiveness of Christianity, and articles from his pen began to appear in Muslim periodicals. The publication of such articles in the *Manshur Muhammadi*, which was issued from Bangalore in Southern India, shows the keenness with which he was controverting the Christian propaganda.

Comparative study of religion

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not, however, a mere controversialist. He was a student of religion, and, as early as 1873, while his father was still alive and he was engaged in law-suits

relating to the family estates, he had determined to make a comparative study of religion and to place the result of his researches before the public. He had already decided to write a book, and the following memorandum in his own handwriting shows his deep consciousness of the superiority and the perfection of the Islamic teachings which it had become his life's aim to establish and for which he wanted freedom from worldly entanglements:

> "In this book, it will be necessary to state that the law of *Mustafa* [the Islamic Law] is perfect and more comprehensive than all other laws. To prove this, a law shall be taken for example, from the Torah in the first place, then from the Gospels, and after that from the Holy Quran, so that when the reader compares the three laws, it will be evident to him which of the three laws is the best and the excellent."

This note is signed thus: "Ghulam Ahmad, 17th October 1873, Friday, Qadian."

The Arya Samaj

He was preparing himself for this great work by studying not only the Islamic literature, the Holy Quran, Hadith and commentaries, but also the literature of other religions, in his spare time. His father's death, in 1876, had opened the way for him to realise the great dream of his life — to establish the superiority of Islam over all other religions. While he was thus fighting single-handed against the vast forces of Christianity, another foe of Islam had appeared in the field, in the form of the Arya Samaj. The founder of this new off-shoot of Hinduism was born in distant Kathiawar, Gujerat, in the Bombay Presidency, in the year 1824. At an early age he fled from his home, and after visiting various centres of Hindu learning and formally starting his mission in 1875 at Bombay, he gave final shape to it two years later at Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, and the Arya Samaj of today rests on the principles enunciated there. Originally, this movement was directed against the idol-

worship of Hinduism, but, as Western education was opening the Hindu mind for the acceptance of Christianity and Islam, the Arya Samaj, from its inception, came into conflict with these two religions.

The Punjab proved to be a fertile land for the Arya Samaj, and, by the end of the year 1878, branches of the organisation were established all over the Punjab, one being established at Qadian itself. It was through this local branch that Ahmad was drawn into a controversy with the Arya Samaj. The local discussion soon assumed importance and found its way into the columns of both Hindu and Muslim papers of Lahore and Amritsar. The *Hindu Bandhu* of Lahore, which was edited by Pandit Shiv Narain Agni Hotri, who later became the founder of another Hindu sect, called the Dev Samaj, opened its columns to articles for and against the Arya Samaj.

The following note from a Hindu editor's pen shows how powerfully Ahmad was carrying the fight against the Arya Samaj:

> "Our readers will remember that the final paper of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sahib, which we published in our issue for February 1879, could not be produced in its entirety in the said number, and was therefore completed in the two following numbers. In that article, the Mirza sahib also made an announcement in which he addressed Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, as well as some of his followers (whose names were given in the said number for February 1879 on p. 39). We very gladly gave room to that article in our periodical and we entertained the hope that, if the arguments given by the Mirza sahib, which were very *clear and based on logical principles, were appreciated by the above mentioned gentlemen*,[3] they would, according to their declared principle that

3. Italics are mine (MA).

> one should always be ready to accept the truth and to give up untruth, publicly and openly declare their faith in the falsity of the transmigration of souls, and thus establish an example of their willingness to accept the truth."

The Brahmo Samaj

It has elsewhere been shown that Ahmad had studied the Bible. His controversies with the Arya Samajists show that he had also studied the Vedas, from such translations as were available, and he repeatedly called upon his opponents to judge the merits of the Holy Quran as compared with other sacred books. Not only was he a student of comparative religion, but he also claimed to have the religious experience which makes man attain communion with God. Therefore it was that he had to devote much of his attention to the Brahmo Samaj, an earlier Hindu reform movement, started by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. It is a well-established fact that the founder of the Brahmo Samaj was mainly influenced by the Muslim Sufi ideals. It was thus a very liberal movement, based on the principle that all religions are true. Yet, strangely enough, it denied the possibility of revelation, and it was this aspect of the Brahmo Samaj which attracted the attention of Ahmad. Pandit Shiv Narain Agni Hotri, the great Brahmo leader at Lahore, himself carried on this controversy, but after some time he deserted the Brahmo Samaj and laid the foundation of a new sect, called the Dev Samaj.

3. *Mujaddid* of the Fourteenth Century *Hijra*

Claim as *Mujaddid*

As I have already stated, Ahmad was not a mere controversialist. He was a student of religion who had made a close study of Islam as well as of other religions and had come to the conclusion that, while other religions contained only partial truth, Islam contained the whole truth, and was, on account of this superiority, destined to be the future religion of the world. To establish this fact he began to write a book called *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, the full name being *Al-Barāhīn al-Ahmadiyya 'alā ḥaqqiyyat Kitāb Allāh al-Qurān wal-nubuwwat-il-Muḥammadiyya*, i.e., "The Ahmadiyya proofs for the truth of the Book of God, the Quran, and the prophethood of Muhammad".

Two years later, i.e., in the closing year of the thirteenth century of *Hijra,* he issued a third part of the same book, in which were published several revelations which he had received from God, in one of which he claimed to be the promised reformer, *mujaddid*, of the fourteenth century of *Hijra.* This revelation, which is published on page 238 of the book, runs thus:

> "The Beneficent God has taught you the Quran so that you may warn a people whose fathers have not been warned, and so that the erroneous path of the guilty may be seen manifestly. Say: I have been commanded by God to deliver His message and I am the first of believers."

At the same time he issued a manifesto stating plainly that he was the *mujaddid* of that century. In this manifesto, he wrote, after speaking of this book:

> "This servant of Allah has given a manifest proof by the grace of God the Almighty that many of the true inspirations and signs and minor miracles and news relating to the unseen and Divine secrets and the visions and prayers that have been accepted are a part of the religious experience of this servant of the faith, the truth of these being borne witness to by many of the religious opponents (the Aryas and others). All these matters have been related in this book, and the author has been given the knowledge *that he is the mujaddid of this time* and that spiritually his excellences resemble the excellences of Messiah, the son of Mary, and that the one of them bears a very strong resemblance and a close relation to the other." [1]

At that time, the Muslims highly appreciated the great services which Ahmad had rendered to the cause of Islam, and greatly admired not only his learning and his powerful refutation of the opponents of Islam, but also his righteousness and piety, and, therefore, they hailed these claims as quite opportune. It was just the commencement of the fourteenth century of *Hijra,* and a hadith of the Holy Prophet promised to them a reformer at the commencement of each century. Besides the hadith, the condition of things in the world of Islam called yet more loudly for the appearance of a reformer. Islam was at the time between two fires — disputes and dissensions which frittered away the whole energy of the Muslim world, and the most terrible attacks on it from without. Here was a man who rose far above all internal dissensions, refusing to take any part in them, and who directed his attention solely to the attacks from without; a soldier of Islam who championed the cause of

1. See *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* 1986 edition, v. 1, p. 24 (*Editor*).

Islam most powerfully, meeting every opponent on his own ground; a learned man whose exposition of the Holy Quran exactly met the need of the time; the fame of his piety was spread far and wide; and what more was needed for a reformer? His claim to be the *mujaddid* was, therefore, generally accepted by the Muslims, laymen as well as theologians.

An epoch-making book

Two years later, in 1884, came out the fourth part of *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, which contained a most powerful exposition of the truth of Islam. This book may rightly be regarded as marking a new epoch in the religious literature of Islam, and it was accorded that position by the greatest *ulama* of the time. Its real object was to establish the Truth of Islam by a long series of cogent and irrefutable reasons and arguments, but by way of comparison dogmas of other religions were also included and subjected to the search-light of reason, and thus the beauties of Islam were manifested all the more clearly. Even such a hostile critic as Walter admits that:

> "…this book was quite universally acclaimed (in so far as it was read), throughout the Muhammadan world as a work of power and originality." [2]

The book won this recognition in spite of the fact that it contained all the material which formed the basis of later differences with the orthodox Muslims. In this work were published the author's revelations in which he was addressed as messenger, prophet and warner. His claim to be inspired by God was never contested. Thus, Maulvi Muhammad Husain, the head of the *Ahl Hadith* (Wahabi) sect in the Punjab, wrote a review of *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, and the following paragraph from this review shows how wide was the acceptance accorded to this book by men of all shades of opinion, the author being a declared Hanafi, to which school of thought he adhered to the last:

2. H.A. Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 16.

> "In our opinion, it is in this time and in the present circumstances, a book the like of which has not been written up to this time in Islam, and nothing can be said about the future; Allah may bring about another affair after this. Its author, too, has proved himself firm in helping the cause of Islam, with his property and his person and his pen and his tongue and his personal religious experience, to such an extent that an example of it is rarely met with among the Muslims who have gone before. If anyone looks upon these words of ours as an Asiatic exaggeration, let him point out to us at least one such book as has in it such forceful refutation of all classes of the opponents of Islam, especially the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj, and let him give us the addresses of two or three persons, the helpers of the cause of Islam, who, besides helping Islam with their properties and their persons and their pens and their tongues, have also come forward with their religious experience and have proclaimed, as against the opponents of Islam and the deniers of revelation, the manly challenge that whoever doubted the truth of revelation may come to them and witness the truth thereof, and who have made non-Muslims taste of the same." [3]

Religious experience

Muslims of the *Ahl Sunnat wal-Jama'at* sect generally admit the existence of saints, or *auliya Allah*, who have been recipients of the gift of Divine inspiration, while the *Ahl Hadith*, popularly known as Wahabis, are generally looked upon as denying the continuance of this gift; nevertheless, here we find the head of the *Ahl Hadith* sect, not only admiring the powerful arguments contained in *Barahin Ahmadiyya* against all sorts of opponents of Islam but also laying special stress on the fact that the author's religious experience was of such a

3. *Isha'at-us-Sunna*, vol. vii, no. 6, June to August, 1884, p. 169–170.

high character, in holding communion with God and in receiving inspiration or revelation from Him, that he had been successful in giving practical proof of such revelation to its deniers. This is only one indication of how Muslim India received Ahmad's claim as *mujaddid* of the fourteenth century of *Hijra.* The purpose of his being raised as a *mujaddid* was also made clear in *Barahin Ahmadiyya.* I quote Ahmad's own words:

> "The spiritual triumph of the religion of Islam which would be brought about by conclusive arguments and shining proofs is destined to be accomplished through this weak mortal, whether it is in his life-time or after his death. Though the religion of Islam has been triumphant from the beginning on account of its truthful arguments, and though from the earliest times its opponents have met with disgrace and dishonour, its conquests over the different sects and nations depended on the coming of a time which, by opening the ways of communication, should turn the whole world into a kind of united states… Thus God intends, by creating me in this age and by granting me hundreds of heavenly signs and extraordinary matters relating to the future, and deep knowledge and truths, and by giving me knowledge of hundreds of sure arguments, to spread and propagate knowledge of the true teachings of the Quran among all nations and in all countries." [4]

Bai'at to serve Islam

Matters remained in this condition for several years during which time Ahmad was generally admitted to be the religious leader and inspired reformer of the Muslims. During that time, he maintained a hard struggle against the onslaughts of the Arya Samaj, which had become very powerful, and which

4. *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, pp. 499–502.

followed in the footsteps of the Christian missionaries in abusing the Prophet of Islam. He undertook an important journey to Hoshiarpur, where in March 1886 a controversy was arranged and held between him and L. Murli Dhar, an Arya Samaj leader of Hoshiarpur. The proceedings of this controversy form a part of his book *Surma-i Chashm-i Arya,* and the important question discussed in it is the Arya Samaj doctrine which denies the creation of matter and soul by God and the permanence of salvation.

On the first of December 1888, he announced that Almighty God had commanded him to accept *bai'at* and to form into a separate class those who came to spiritual life through him. He wrote:

> "I have been commanded that those who seek after truth should enter my *bai'at*, in order to give up dirty habits and slothful and disloyal ways of life and in order to imbibe true faith and a truly pure life that springs from faith and to learn the ways of the love of God." [5]

Bai'at is, among the Sufis, the oath of fealty which the disciple takes when giving his hand into the hand of his spiritual guide, but the *bai'at* which Ahmad wanted from his followers was a promise to guard the cause of Islam, to deliver its message, and to place the service of Islam above all other considerations. There were ten conditions which the disciple had to accept, the eighth of these being:

> "That he will regard religion and the honour of religion and the sympathy of Islam as dearer to him than his life and his property and his honour and his children and everyone dear to him."

These ten conditions were retained after his claim to the Promised Messiahship and up to the end of his life, but when

5. See *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* 1986 edition, v. 1, p. 188 (*Editor*).

disciples came in larger numbers, these were shortened, the following words taking the place of the eighth condition:

"I will place religion above the world."

It is easy to see that this pledge was quite different from the ordinary pledge which is taken in the Sufi orders, and its object was no other than to uphold the honour of Islam at all costs, to guard Islam against all attacks and to carry its message to the farthest ends of the world. Here was a spiritual commander who needed a spiritual force to guard the spiritual territories of Islam and to lead Islam to further spiritual conquests.

4. Mahdi and Messiah

Claim to Messiahship

The task before him was a difficult one. The Muslims had lost that love and zeal for the spread of Islam which led the earlier sons of Islam to the distant corners of the world. Many people, however, came to him and took the pledge. While preparing himself and his followers for the great conquests, he made an announcement which fell like a bombshell among the Muslim public — that Jesus Christ was not alive, as was generally believed by the Muslims, but that he had died as all other prophets had died, and that his advent among the Muslims meant the advent of a *mujaddid* in his spirit and power; that no Mahdi would come, as generally thought, to convert unbelievers with the sword, as this was opposed to the basic teachings of the Quran, but that the Mahdi's conquests were to be spiritual; and that the prophecies relating to the advent of a Messiah and a Mahdi were fulfilled in his own person.

It was about eighteen months after his call to *bai'at* that this announcement was made and it changed the whole attitude of the Muslim community towards him. Those very people who hailed him in his capacity of *mujaddid* as the saviour of Islam now called him an impostor, an arch-heretic and Anti-Christ.

Recluse and soldier

Ahmad based both his claims, the claim to mujaddidship and the claim to Messiahship, on Divine revelation, and it is easy to see that nothing but the fullest conviction that he was

commanded by God could have led him to adopt a course which, he knew, would bring him from the height of fame and distinction, to which he had attained, to the depth of degradation in the eyes of his own community. If public esteem and fame were the goal of Ahmad's aspirations, he had indeed achieved them. He knew that his departure from an established popular conception must injure his reputation and turn his very friends and admirers into foes; but he cared little for public opinion and even less for fame.

He was then an old man and the fifty-five years of his earlier life show but one desire: the desire to see Islam triumphant in the world, and they point to but one aim: the aim to serve the cause of Islam. His father had often remonstrated with him on account of his neglect of his worldly concerns and had exhorted him to look after the family estate, but in vain. He had not shown the least desire to become a great man in the world; he did not even care to maintain the position which his family enjoyed. His love of solitude continued unabated to the last and the only thing for which he would come in contact with others was to uphold the dignity of Islam and to safeguard its honour. He was a recluse all his life, except when duty called him to fight the battle of Islam, and then he was a soldier who could wield his weapon against each and every assailant. The stream of life which had flowed consistently and constantly in one direction could not suddenly take a turn in the opposite direction. The hand of God had undoubtedly been preparing him from early life to champion the cause of Islam, and he was at this point Divinely directed to remove, by his claim to Promised Messiahship and Mahdiship, the two great obstacles which stood in the way of the propagation of Islam.

Today anyone can see that Islam and Christianity are the only two religions contending for the spiritual mastery of the world, all other religions being limited to one or two countries. At the time when Ahmad began to work, Islam seemed to have been utterly vanquished by Christianity, not only by reason of the temporal ascendancy of Christianity but also because

Christianity was completely master in the field of propaganda, Islam being almost entirely unrepresented. In this helpless state, the Muslims had, to a very great extent, come under the influence of the Christian propaganda, which, on the one hand, impugned the character of the Holy Prophet, and, on the other, laid stress on the superiority of Jesus Christ over the Founder of Islam. In support of this latter allegation were brought forward certain erroneous views which had taken root among the Muslims; for instance, that Jesus Christ was alive in the heavens while all the other prophets had died, and that he would reappear in the world when Islam would be in great distress, and thus that he would, in the real sense, be the last Prophet and the saviour of Islam. To establish the superiority of Islam and to open the way for its conquest of the world, it was necessary not only to clear the character of the Holy Prophet of those false charges but also to uproot those erroneous doctrines. Thus, when Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was commissioned for the great task of leading Islam to a world-conquest, when the Divine mantle of mujaddidship fell upon his shoulders and when he began to enlist, through *bai'at*, an army of soldiers to fight the spiritual battle of Islam, God gave him the knowledge that the prevailing view of the Muslim world relating to Jesus Christ was erroneous and not supported by the Holy Quran, that Jesus Christ had died as had all other prophets and that his prophesied second advent was to be taken in a metaphorical sense and to mean the advent of a reformer (*mujaddid*) with his spirit and power.

Two baseless doctrines

The two matters were so closely correlated that in the solution of the one lay the solution of the other. If Jesus was dead, his personal second advent was impossible, and that prophecy could be interpreted only in the same way as Jesus himself interpreted the prophecy of the second advent of Elijah. The false conception that Jesus was alive in heaven was, however, so deep-rooted in the Muslim mind that they would listen to no arguments which militated against this long-cherished belief,

even though they were based on the absolute authority of the Holy Quran and the Hadith. They were not in a mood to think that, in the very fitness of things, this exactly should be the mission of the *mujaddid* of this age. Christianity, practically the only adversary of Islam and the most formidable, had this one main prop to support its whole structure of doctrines and dogmas — Jesus sitting with God in heaven. To pull this main prop down would mean the crumbling of the whole like a house of cards, and this work had to be done to open the way for the conquests of Islam in the West.

Coupled with the wrong notion that Jesus Christ was alive in heaven and would come down, there was another equally unfounded conception, and equally detrimental to the cause of Islam, namely that the Mahdi would appear just at the same time and would wage war to enforce Islam at the point of sword. Already Islam had been misrepresented in the West as having been established by means of the sword, and the doctrine of a Mahdi coming to wage war to establish the superiority of Islam only lent further support to the misrepresentations of the Christian West, causing the hatred against Islam to become deeper and deeper day by day. That false notion also had to be cut at the very roots. “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256), was a clear principle established by the Holy Quran, and there was not a single instance in which the Holy Prophet brought the pressure of the sword to bear on any one individual, let alone a whole nation, to compel the embracing of Islam. “Fight against those who fight against you” (2:190), was the only permission that Islam gave in the matter of fighting, and even the Holy Prophet, to say nothing of the Mahdi, could not go against the Holy Quran. The Mahdi (lit., *the guided one*) was only another name for the Messiah — such was the announcement made by Ahmad, and in support of this was quoted the Prophet’s hadith:

"There is no Mahdi but the Messiah." [1]

Storm of opposition

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had thus, in the very cause of Islam, to combat the idea that, for its conquests, Islam stood in need either of Jesus Christ or the sword. He emphasised that men endowed with great gifts, even men like the Messiah, could rise among its followers, and that the spiritual power of Islam was greater than all the swords of the world; but Mulla mentality was too narrow for these broad views. Led by Maulvi Muhammad Husain, the *Ahl Hadith* leader, who had only six years before acclaimed Ahmad as one of the greatest sons of Islam, and as one who had rendered unique service to the cause of Islam by his powerful arguments and by the heavenly signs which he had shown to his opponents, the *ulama* now declared him to be an arch-heretic. Some of them even went so far as to declare that he and his followers could not enter mosques or be buried in Muslim graveyards, that their property could be taken away with impunity and that their marriages were void. The storm of opposition that followed those *fatwas* can better be imagined than described, but all this opposition did not make Ahmad swerve an inch from the position which he had taken. The most hostile critics have nothing but praise for his courage in the face of the bitterest opposition, even of attempts at physical violence. Thus wrote Dr. Griswold:

> "His persistency in affirming his claims in the face of the most intense and bitter opposition is magnificent. He is willing to suffer on behalf of his claims." [2]

Thus the year 1890 divides his life into two parts, and this is so from more points of view than one. As a reformer or *mujaddid,* the Muslims submitted to his claims and had no fault to find with him, but as the Promised Messiah there was no epithet of irreverence, no word of calumny, which was not

1. *Ibn Majah,* Ch. *Shiddat-uz-Zaman*.
2. H.A. Walter, *The Ahmadiyya Movement*, p. 21.

applied to him. The whole course of his life till this time is admitted by his bitterest enemies to be free of all blame, but there is no blame which was not laid to his charge after the announcement of the claim to Messiahship. Another circumstance is that the latter period of his life is only a fulfilment of the earlier in more senses than one. Firstly, in his earlier life he was being prepared by the hand of the Almighty for the fulfilment of some great purpose. Secondly, promises made to him in revelations published in *Barahin Ahmadiyya* were fulfilled in the latter part of his life. The first period is the period of announcement of prophecies of future victory and discomfiture of his enemies, and the second period is the period of the fulfilment of these promises after he has passed through the flaming fire of opposition.

Resolution to carry Islam forward

As I have stated, the opposition came not from one quarter but from all sides. All sects of Islam denounced him, just as they had all praised him before, while the Christians and the Arya Samajists, against whom he had been fighting in the cause of Islam for so long a time, were only too glad to join hands with the Muslims. In spite of all, Ahmad stood adamant. No abuse, no denunciation, no persecution, no threat of murder disturbed for a single moment the equilibrium of his mind or caused him to entertain for an instant the idea of relinquishing in despair the cause which he had so long upheld. Nay, in the midst of a widespread and bitter opposition on all sides, he reaffirmed with still greater force his resolution to carry the message of Islam to the farthest ends of the world, and his conviction that Islam would triumph became greater. It is the unique spectacle of a soldier carrying on the fight single-handed while the powerful forces of opposition were arrayed before his face, and he was being hit in the back by the very people for whom he was fighting.

The claim to Promised Messiahship was advanced in three books which appeared one after another at short intervals. In the first of these, *Fath-i Islam,* he writes:

> "Do not wonder that Almighty God has in this time of need and in the days of this deep darkness sent down a heavenly light and, having chosen a servant of His for the good of mankind in general, He has sent him to make uppermost the religion of Islam and to spread the light brought by the best of His creatures[3] and to strengthen the cause of the Muslims and to purify their internal condition." [4]

And again:

> "And the truth will win and the freshness and light of Islam which characterised it in the earlier days will be restored and that sun will rise again as it arose first in the full resplendence of its light. But it is necessary that heaven should withhold its rising till our hearts bleed with labour and hard work and we sacrifice all comforts for its appearance and submit ourselves to all kinds of disgrace for the honour of Islam. The life of Islam demands a sacrifice from us, and what is that? That we die in this way." [5]

Significance underlying claim

Apart from the narrow-minded *Mulla* who could not grasp the significance underlying Ahmad's claim to Promised Messiahship, even the educated Muslim thinks that this claim brought nothing but schism in the house of Islam. It is true that much of Ahmad's time was taken up, after 1891, with controversy against the orthodox, and it became bitter too at times, but the internal struggle never made him lose sight of his real objective, which had indeed become more marked and definite. As

3. The "best of creatures" refers to the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

4. *Fath-i Islam*, p. 7.

5. *Fath-i Islam*, p. 15–16. (*Editor's Note:* In the light of recent events, we may state here what is obvious in any case, that "Die in this way" means to devote the rest of one's life to the service of Islam, bringing to an end one's previous life of heedlessness and pursuit of material desires.)

to internal dissensions, they were already there; in fact, the Muslims had lost all objectives except fighting amongst themselves on the minutest points of difference. Therefore, they had no eye for the higher issues involved in Ahmad's claim, but spent their whole force in carrying on a struggle about minor differences.

Moreover, the great cause of Islam — its onward march in the world — had nothing to lose from the claim to Promised Messiahship; Jesus' death added only one more to the numerous prophets who, including the Holy Prophet Muhammad, had all died; but to Christianity it meant the death of its central figure, with whose death collapsed the whole structure of its dogmas. Nay, the cause of Islam gained immeasurable strength from it; for, as long as the Muslim believed that Jesus was alive in heaven and that he would make his descent at some future time to bring about the triumph of Islam, his mentality remained one of fond dreams never to be realised, and that was largely the reason why the Muslim had lost the zeal and energy of the earlier days for carrying forward the message of Islam. Islam's triumph was, he believed, bound up with the coming of Jesus Christ and of Imam Mahdi, and he had nothing to do but to wait and see. Such was the hidden process of thought which made him quite inactive. That the Messiah who was to come had already appeared was an idea which shifted the responsibility to his own shoulders; nay, it brought back to him the zeal to carry forward the message of Islam. If the Messiah had come, the time had also arrived for the world conquest of Islam. This was the great mental revolution achieved among those who accepted Ahmad as the Messiah; a mere handful of men, but carrying the message of Islam to the farthest ends of the world, while the millions of the orthodox are either idle or occupied with their internal dissensions.

From defence to attack

In Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's own work, two changes are clearly witnessed with his claim to Promised Messiahship. The first is

that, as far as the contest with Christianity was concerned, he had hitherto been carrying on a defensive war — clearing the Holy Prophet of the false charges brought against him by the Christian missionaries; but his new claim involved an aggressive line of action — the destruction of the very foundations on which the Church, as distinguished from the Christianity preached by Christ, was built. Right at the beginning of *Fath-i Islam*, his first pamphlet making the new announcement, he wrote clearly:

> "I … bear a strong resemblance to the nature of the Messiah, and it is owing to this natural resemblance that I have been sent in the name of the Messiah, so that the doctrine of the cross may be shattered to pieces. Therefore, I have been sent to break the cross and to kill the swine." (p. 17)

Thus the contest between Christianity and Islam was no longer to be limited to the defence of Islam; the spiritual forces of Islam had to be gathered together to attack Christianity itself.

Dajjal, Gog and Magog

The other change which resulted from the claim to Promised Messiahship was that it gave a definite direction to the mission which Ahmad believed had been entrusted to him, namely to bring about the triumph of Islam and to lead it on to a world-conquest. Henceforth, Europe or the Western world became his special objective, and that new idea was born as a twin to the idea that he was the Promised Messiah. Both ideas — the idea that he was the Promised Messiah and the idea that his mission was to carry the message of Islam to the Western world — took their birth at one and the same time. It was not a casual coincidence; the two ideas were closely interrelated.

The advent of the Promised Messiah did not stand alone in eschatological prophecy; it was essentially combined with the idea of the appearance of the Anti-Christ (*Dajjal*) and of Gog and Magog (*Ya'juj wa Ma'juj*). In fact, the Promised Messiah's

first and foremost work was to be to put an end to the influence of the *Dajjal* and of Gog and Magog. Now the prevalent idea among the Muslims was that the *Dajjal* was a one-eyed man who would make his appearance in the latter days with the treasures of the world at his command, that he would lay claim to Godhead, carrying even paradise and hell with him, and that he would traverse the whole earth in forty days, visiting every habitation of men, inviting them to accept his divinity and enriching those who followed him, and that Gog and Magog would be an extraordinary creation of God, who would spread over the whole earth. The truth, which had remained hidden for thirteen centuries after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, flashed upon Ahmad's mind at the very time when he was raised to the dignity of Messiahship. This truth was that the *Dajjal* and Gog and Magog of the prophecies were no other than the Christian nations of Europe and America. In their religious attitude, in contradicting the teachings of Christ and the teachings of all the prophets of God, they represented the Anti-Christ, while in their material power and materialistic tendencies they represented Gog and Magog.

Thus, in his first great work on the subject entitled *Izala Auham*, when announcing his claim to Promised Messiahship, after discussing at length the prophecies relating to the appearance of the *Dajjal* and Gog and Magog, he wrote as follows under the caption, *It was necessary that the Anti-Christ should come forth from the Church*:

> **"**Now this question deserves to be solved that, as the advent of the Messiah, the son of Mary, is meant for the *Dajjal*, if I have come in the spirit of the Messiah, who is the *Dajjal* against me? … In the first place, it must be remembered that literally *Dajjal* means *an association of liars who mix up truth with falsehood and who use deceit and underhand means to lead astray the creation of God* … If we ponder over … the condition of all those people who have done the work of *Dajjal* since the creation of Adam, we do not find

another people who have manifested that characteristic to the extent to which the Christian missionaries have done. They have before their eyes an imaginary Messiah who, they allege, is still living and who claimed to be God; but the Messiah, son of Mary, never claimed to be God; it is they who are claiming Divinity on his behalf, and to make this claim successful, they have resorted to all kinds of alterations and have made use of all means of deceit. With the exception of Makka and Madina, there is no place to which they have not gone … They are so rich that the treasures of the world go along with them wherever they go … And they carry along with them a kind of paradise and hell. So, whoever is willing to accept their religion, that paradise is shown to him, and whoever becomes a severe opponent of them, he is threatened with hell … There is not one sign of the *Dajjal* that is not met with in them … Hence those people represent the *Dajjal* who was to come forth from the Church.

"Now doubts are raised that the *Dajjal* must be one-eyed, being blind in the right eye, that Gog and Magog must appear at the same time … and that the sun must arise from the west at the same time . . .

"These doubts would vanish when it is seen that *one-eyed* does not mean physically blind in one eye. God says in the Holy Quran : 'Whoever is blind in this life shall be blind in the hereafter'. Does 'the blind' here carry the significance of physical blindness? Nay, it means spiritual blindness. And the meaning is that the *Dajjal* shall be devoid of spiritual wisdom, and that, though he will be sharp in worldly wisdom, and will make great inventions and show great wonders as if he were claiming Godhead, yet he will have no spiritual eye, just as we find today is the case with the

people of Europe and America that they have gone to the utmost extent in worldly scheming.

"As regards Gog and Magog, it is unquestionable that these are two prosperous nations of the world, one of them being the English and the other the Russians.[6] Both these nations are directing their attacks from a height towards what is beneath their feet, i.e., they are becoming victorious with their God-given powers … Both these nations are also mentioned in the Bible.

"As regards the rising of the sun from the West, we do believe in it; but what has been shown to me in a vision is this — that the rising of the sun from the West signifies that the Western world which has been involved of old in the darkness of unbelief and error shall be made to shine with the sun of Truth, and those people shall have their share of Islam. I saw that I was standing on a pulpit in the city of London and explaining the truth of Islam in a strongly-argumented speech in the English language; and, after this, I caught a large number of birds that were sitting on small trees, and in colour they were white, and their size was probably the size of the partridge. So I interpreted this dream as meaning that, though I may not personally go there, yet my writings would spread among those people and many righteous Englishmen would accept the truth. In reality, the Western countries have, up to this time, shown very little aptitude for religious truths, as if spiritual wisdom had in its entirety been granted to Asia, and material wisdom to Europe and America … now Almighty God intends to cast on them the look of mercy." [7]

6. *Editor's Note:* By the English and the Russians are meant the Teutonic and Slav races respectively.

7. *Izala Auham*, pp. 478–516.

Islamization of Europe

One wonders when one finds that a man who lived in a village, far removed from all centres of activity, who did not know a word of English, whose knowledge of Europe was almost negligible, has visions that he is delivering a speech in English in London and explaining the truths of Islam to Europeans, and that the people of Europe will accept Islam. The history of Islam shows how such visions have materialised before. The great saint of Ajmer, Khwaja Mu'in-ud-Din Chishti, saw in a dream, while in Madina, that he was preaching Islam in India, and the saint of Qadian sees in a vision that he is spreading Islam in Europe. India has fulfilled the dream of the saint of Ajmer, and Europe is undoubtedly on its way to fulfil the vision of the saint of Qadian.

Amidst all the persecution to which he was subjected, Ahmad's heart throbbed with but one desire — the desire to spread Islam in the West — and that was the message with which he came as the Promised Messiah. Europe was identical with *Dajjal*, and the Messiah must overcome the *Dajjal*. Flames of the fire of opposition rose high on all sides, but he had an eye on the goal and he proposed to sit down calmly in the midst of this fire and write books disclosing the beauties of Islam and meeting the objections not only of Christian missionaries but also of those whom materialism was bringing in its train:

> "Then so far as it lies in my power I intend to broadcast, in all the countries of Europe and Asia, the knowledge and blessings which the Holy Spirit of God has granted me … It is undoubtedly true that Europe and America have a large collection of objections against Islam, inculcated through those engaged in Mission work, and that their philosophy and natural sciences give rise to another sort of criticism. My enquiries have led me to the conclusion that there are nearly three thousand points which have been raised as objections against Islam … To meet these objections, a

chosen man is needed who should have a river of knowledge flowing in his vast breast and whose knowledge should have been specially broadened and deepened by Divine inspiration … So my advice is that … writings of a good type should be sent into those countries. If my people help me heart and soul I wish to prepare a commentary of the Holy Quran which should be sent to them after it has been rendered into the English language. I cannot refrain from stating clearly that this is my work, and that no one else can do it as well as I or he who is an offshoot of mine and thus is included in me." [8]

"In this critical time, a man has been raised up by God and he desires that he may show the beautiful face of Islam to the whole world and open its ways to the Western countries." [9]

8. *Izala Auham*, pp. 771–773.

9. *Ibid*., p. 769.

5. Opposition

Controversies with *Ulama*

Though his real objective was the spread of Islam in the West, he could not avoid controversy with the orthodox *ulama* who opposed him tooth and nail. Often would he say that, if the *ulama* left him alone, he would devote himself, heart and soul, to the cause of the advancement of Islam, but he had perforce to write a large number of books, tracts and pamphlets to explain his own position, and to carry on a number of controversies. The first controversy took place at Ludhiana, soon after the announcement of his claim to Promised Messiahship, with Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala, his erstwhile admirer, and lasted from 20th to 29th July 1891. Particulars of this controversy are contained in a pamphlet called *al-Haqq*.

In September he went to Delhi, the great stronghold of orthodox *ulama*, and there he met with the severest opposition. The Muslim religious leaders made inflammatory speeches, full of misrepresentations, to rouse their followers to behave quite savagely. All plans of a controversy with the Delhi *ulama* failed, and at last in the end of October a controversy was held with Maulvi Muhammad Bashir who was invited from Bhopal.

As far as the claim itself was concerned, there was nothing in it that could be called heretical. Every Muslim had a right to interpret the Quran and the Hadith, and Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did not for a moment deny those authorities, but put on them an interpretation different from that which the orthodox Mullas held, and on that score no one could find fault with him. He

again and again explained that the Holy Quran repeatedly spoke of the death of Jesus Christ and did not, on a single occasion, state that he was alive in heaven or that he was raised up bodily to some upper region. Therefore his advent, as spoken of in Hadith, could be taken only in a metaphorical sense, and the claim to Promised Messiahship was only an offshoot of his generally recognised claim to mujaddidship. The *ulama* could not meet him on that ground — the position was so clear — and therefore they resorted to misrepresentations, saying that he denied certain articles of the Muslim faith; for instance, that he claimed to be a prophet and thus denied the finality of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, that he denied the existence of angels, that he denied miracles and so on.

Refutation of false charges

These charges were refuted by him again and again. The following manifesto was issued by him at Delhi on 2nd October 1891. It is headed *An Announcement by a Traveller*, and opens thus:

> "I have heard that some of the leading *ulama* of this city are giving publicity to the false charge against me that I lay claim to prophethood and that I do not believe in angels, or in heaven and hell, or in the existence of Gabriel, or in *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, or in miracles and the *Mi'raj* of the Holy Prophet. So, in the interest of truth, I do hereby publicly declare that all this is complete fabrication. I am not a claimant to prophethood, nor am I a denier of miracles, angels, *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, etc. On the other hand, I confess belief in all those matters which are included in the Islamic principles of faith, and, in accordance with the belief of *Ahl Sunnat wal-Jama'at*, I believe in all those things which are established by the Quran and Hadith, and I believe that any claimant to prophethood and messengership after our lord and master Muhammad Mustafa

> (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him), the last of the messengers, is a liar and an unbeliever. It is my conviction that Divine revelation, which is granted to messengers, began with Adam, the chosen one of God, and came to a close with the Messenger of God, Muhammad Mustafa, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him." [1]

A few days later, he addressed an assembly in the *Jami' Masjid* (Central Mosque) of Delhi in the following words:

> "Other charges which are advanced against me that I am a denier of *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, miracles and *Mi'raj,* and that I am also a claimant to prophethood and a denier of the finality of prophethood — all these charges are untrue and absolutely false. In all these matters, my belief is the same as the belief of other *Ahl Sunnat wal-Jama'at* and such objections against my books, *Tauzih Maram* and *Izala Auham*, are only an error of the fault-finders. Now I make a plain confession of the following matters before Muslims in this house of God — I am a believer in the finality of the prophethood of the Last of the Prophets (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) and I look upon anyone who denies the finality of prophethood to be a heretic and outside the pale of Islam. Similarly, I am a believer in angels, miracles, etc." [2]

No claim to prophethood

It is rather strange that he was charged as laying claim to prophethood in his book *Izala Auham* which contains a large number of statements expressly denying a claim to prophethood and expressing faith in the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad. I refer here to only one such statement which is given in the form of question and answer:

1. See *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* 1986 edition, vol. 1, pp. 230–231 (*Editor*).
2. *Ibid.,* vol. 1, p. 255 (*Editor*).

> *"Question*: In the pamphlet *Fath-i Islam*, claim has been laid to prophethood.
>
> *"Answer*: There is no claim to being a prophet but a claim to being a *muhaddath,*[3] and this claim has been advanced by the command of Allah. Further, there is no doubt that *muhaddathiyya* also contains a strong part of prophethood… If then this be called metaphorically prophethood or be regarded as a strong part of prophethood, does this amount to a claim to prophethood?" [4]

Early in the following year he went to Lahore where he held a controversy with Maulvi Abdul Hakim. That controversy was brought to a close by the following announcement which Ahmad made in the presence of several witnesses:

> "Be it known to all the Muslims that all such words as occur in my writings *Fath-i Islam*, *Tauzih Maram* and *Izala Auham*, to the effect that the *muhaddath* is in one sense a prophet, or that *muhaddathiyya* is partial prophethood or imperfect prophethood, are not to be taken in the real sense, but have been used according to their root-meaning; otherwise, I lay no claim whatever to actual prophethood. On the other hand, as I have written in my book *Izala Auham*, p. 137, my belief is that our lord and master Muhammad Mustafa (may peace and the blessings of God be upon him) is the last of the prophets. So I wish to make it known to all Muslims that, if they are displeased with these words and if these words give injury to their feelings, they may regard all such words as amended and may read instead the word *muhaddath*, for I do by no means wish to create any dissension among the Muslims.

3. One who is spoken to by God, though not a prophet.

4. *Izala Auham,* pp. 421–422.

> From the beginning, as God knows best, my intention has never been to use this word *nabi* as meaning actually a prophet but only as signifying a *muhaddath*, which the Holy Prophet has explained as meaning *one who is spoken to by God*. Of the *muhaddath* it is stated in a saying of the Holy Prophet:
>
> > Among those that were before you of the Israelites, there used to be men who were spoken to by God, though they were not prophets, and if there is one among my followers, it is Umar — *Sahih Bukhari*, volume 1, page 521, part 14.
>
> Therefore, I have not the least hesitation in stating my meaning in another form for the conciliation of my Muslim brethren, and that other form is that wherever the word *nabi* (prophet) is used in my writings, it should be taken as meaning *muhaddath*, and the word *nabi* should be regarded as having been blotted out." [5]

This writing was drawn up in the form of an agreement and signed by eight witnesses. Certainly there could be no plainer words, and, though Maulvi Abdul Hakim withdrew from the debate on receiving this plain assurance, yet those who had signed the *fatwa* of *kufr* persisted in their false charges, saying that these assurances were meant only to deceive the public.

5. See *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* 1986 edition, vol. 1, pp. 312–314 (*Editor*).

6. Diverse Work and Activities

Diversified work

The years that followed were years of the greatest tribulation for Ahmad, and, at the same time, years of the greatest activity in his life. He was fifty-five years of age, the age at which a man in the Indian climate is supposed to have exhausted his energy; but in Ahmad's case the time of his greatest activity begins just where it ends for others. His work became so diversified that it can hardly be supposed that he could find time for writing books. He received a large number of guests and visitors from all parts of India and he attended to them all personally. He had to educate his disciples, to satisfy enquirers and to meet opponents, and he passed hours with them at meals, in regular daily walks and after the five daily prayers. As he was at the zenith of his reputation when he laid claim to Promised Messiahship, enquiries were addressed to him in very large numbers, and his mail bag, although very heavy, was disposed of by him personally till very late in life. He had to undertake journeys to meet his opponents in controversial discussions — Muslims, Christians and Arya Samajists; and, the most repugnant of all duties, he had to appear in courts to answer criminal charges and defamation suits brought against him by his opponents.

Yet in the midst of all those varied occupations which would hardly seem to leave any time for serious literary work, he produced, during that period of seventeen years, over seven thousand pages, much of which was original research work, of closely printed matter in Urdu, Arabic and Persian in book

form alone, while before the age of fifty-five he had produced only about eight hundred pages. An inexhaustible store of energy seems to have been pent up within his heart; and all this in spite of the fact that, from early youth, he was afflicted with two diseases, syncope and polyuria, which at times weakened him very much, but when the attack was over he was again at the helm, quite like a young man.

A few facts may be noted here showing the diversity of Ahmad's occupations. His controversies with the orthodox *ulama*, held at Ludhiana, Delhi and Lahore, in 1891 and 1892, each lasting for several days, have already been mentioned. In 1893, he was engaged in a very important controversy with the Christian missionaries at Amritsar, and that occupied him for over two weeks. It was in that controversy that he laid down the principle that every claim as to the truth or falsehood of a religious doctrine, and the arguments for or against it, should be produced from the sacred book which a people followed, and he showed with great vigour that the Holy Quran alone fulfilled that condition. The proceedings of this controversy are published in a book entitled *Jang Muqaddas*, which means 'Holy War'.

Guru Nanak's *Chola*

In 1895, he turned his attention to Sikhism, another offshoot of Hinduism, which had gained considerable strength in the Punjab. His enquiries into the religious scriptures of the Sikhs led him to the conclusion that the founder of Sikhism had not only come under the influence of Muslim Sufis but that he was in fact a Muslim, though the movement started by him took a different turn owing to political reasons. To set a seal on this conclusion, he undertook a journey to Dera Nanak, a village in the Gurdaspur District, and one of the sacred places of Sikhism. A *chola* (cloak), which is a relic of Guru Nanak himself and which is in the custody of his descendants, is preserved there. It is a long cloak with short sleeves and is made of brown cloth. A tradition in the *Sakhi* of Bhai Bala,

more commonly known as Angad's *Sakhi*, states that the *chola* was sent down to Nanak from heaven and that upon it were written the words of nature in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. Upon Nanak's death, the *chola* passed to his first successor, Angad, and thus to successive Gurus, till the time of the fifth Guru, Arjan Das. In his time, the *chola* was obtained by Tola Ram, in recognition of some great service done. After some time, it fell into the hands of Kabli Mal, a descendant of Nanak, and, since then, it has remained in the hands of his descendants at Dera Nanak. On account of the high repute and sanctity in which the *chola* was held by the followers of Nanak, the practice became common at an early date of offering coverings to protect it from wear and tear. The mystery which surrounded the *chola* became deeper by the increased number of coverings which hid it altogether from the eye of the worshipper. Only a part of the sleeve was shown, but, by constant handling, the letters on that part became quite obscure.

As the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement had already come to the conclusion that Guru Nanak was in fact a true Muslim, he also thought of solving the mystery enshrouding the *chola*. Accordingly, on 30th September 1895, he started, with some of his friends, for Dera Nanak. By special arrangements made with the guardian of the *chola*, the numerous coverings, mostly of silk or fine cloth, were taken off one by one, and the actual writing on the *chola* was revealed. This was nothing but verses of the Holy Quran, and they were at once copied. This wonderful disclosure of the writing on the *chola* showed clearly that Nanak was a Muslim at heart. The result of the investigation was published in a book, called *Sat Bachan*; and though the orthodox Sikhs were greatly aroused when it appeared, yet the truth of its statements concerning the *chola* has never been questioned.

Prosecutions

After this, during 1897 to 1904, Ahmad had to leave Qadian on several occasions in connection with certain cases brought

against him by his opponents. Long before these cases began, the promise of Divine assistance and success had been given to him. Apart from this, in almost every case he received revelations informing him beforehand of the institution of the case and of his success in it. It is remarkable that a person who should be sued, every now and then, in criminal courts should have success on his side in all cases, especially when it is borne in mind that prosecutions against him were often conducted by men who had mighty forces at their back. Without a single exception the prosecutions hopelessly failed. Only God's hand could have saved a man who had all earthly forces directed against him.

In 1897, he had to appear in the court of the District Magistrate of Gurdaspur to answer the charge of abetment of murder, brought forward by Dr. Henry Martyn Clarke of the Church Missionary Society. The allegation was that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had deputed one of his disciples to murder Dr. Clarke. The orthodox Muslims, represented by Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala, and the Arya Samajists, represented by Chaudhary Ram Bhaj Dutt, the President of the Arya Samaj, Lahore, who offered to conduct the case free of charge, joined hands with Dr. Clarke. The District Magistrate, Capt. M.W. Douglas, after a thorough inquiry, found that the chief witness in the case had been schooled in his evidence by certain Christian missionaries who worked with Dr. Clarke, and he acquitted Ahmad.

Some weeks before the institution of the proceedings, the Promised Messiah had seen a vision to the effect that lightning came down upon his house, but that it did no harm. Along with it were the words: "This is nothing but a threatening from the authorities". In the course of the proceedings other revelations were received foretelling his clearance from the charge. All these revelations are published on the title page of *Kitab-ul-Bariyya.* The case, though to all appearance a very serious one, ended in accordance with these revelations.

In the next year, he had again to go several times to Gurdaspur and to Pathankot to answer a charge of breach of the peace, which, it was alleged by the Police, he had threatened by the publication of certain prophecies. The other party in this case was Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala. The Maulvi and some of his followers had been publishing a long series of abusive and calumnious writings against the Promised Messiah. When this type of writing reached a climax, Ahmad published an announcement on 21st November 1898 in which he declared that God had informed him that Maulvi Muhammad Husain and his friends would be brought to disgrace within thirteen months, just as they wished to bring him to disgrace. The Police took this announcement as a ground for his prosecution.[1] The Promised Messiah wrote a pamphlet entitled *Haqiqat-ul-Mahdi,* containing revelations as to the end of the case and published it before the case came for final hearing in the court of the District Magistrate of Gurdaspur. Some of the copies were distributed at the door of the court on the day of the hearing. The revelations foretold that he would be acquitted and that his opponent would be prohibited from issuing any more obscene literature against him. The judgment of the case was exactly in accordance with the prophecies, and so greatly impressed those who had, only an hour or two before, read the prophecies that even his Christian counsel, when questioned by an Ahmadi on coming

1. The prophecy itself was fulfilled within a few days of its publication. Maulvi Muhammad Husain believed in a Mahdi who would convert the world to Islam by means of the sword, but in a paper in English, and meant for the government, he expressed the view that the Hadith reports relating to the coming of a fighting Mahdi were all open to question and unauthentic. This paper reached the Promised Messiah and one of his followers undertook to obtain a verdict from the Maulvis as to a person who held such a view about the Mahdi. They unanimously declared that such a person was a heretic and applied to him all those epithets of abuse which at one time they had applied to the Promised Messiah at the instigation of Maulvi Muhammad Husain himself. Thus was Muhammad Husain brought to disgrace, his humiliation being similar to that which he had tried to bring upon the Promised Messiah.

out of the courtroom as to what turn the case had taken, replied that the prophecy of the Mirza had been fulfilled.

In January 1903, he had to appear at Jhelum to answer charges in two cases of defamation brought against him by Maulvi Karam Din. Both these cases were dismissed at the first hearing. At Jhelum, he was received with great enthusiasm by the public, and nearly one thousand persons entered into his *bai'at* in a single day. Nearly a year before the charges were preferred and warrants issued, he had seen a vision, which was published in *Al-Hakam* in November 1901, to the effect that warrants would be issued against him but that ultimately he would be acquitted. After the institution of the criminal proceedings against him it was again revealed to him that the prosecutor would be discomfited and that he would be discharged. This revelation was published in *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, which was then in the press, and the book was published and circulated three days before the case came for hearing, as the title page shows. On the very day of the hearing, the book was distributed freely in the court compound. The fact of the publication of the book before the hearing of the cases was attested by the complainant himself in a later case which he brought against the Promised Messiah on the basis of certain words used in the prophecy mentioned above. The judgment of the court was delivered two days after the first hearing, and it established the truth of the prophecy in a wonderful manner.

During the latter part of the year 1903, he had to appear several times at Gurdaspur in connection with another defamation case brought by the same complainant who had failed at Jhelum. On account of the academic discussions to which it gave rise, the case was protracted for nearly eighteen months. For about five months it had a daily hearing, and during that time Ahmad had to take up his residence at Gurdaspur. This case also ended in his acquittal on appeal. Regarding the end of this case the first revelation was that a victory would be granted like the victory of the day of Hunain, in which battle the Muslim forces were first defeated but they

soon afterwards recovered their position and routed the enemy. Another revelation the Promised Messiah received at Gurdaspur on the day of the first hearing of the case was: "I will honour you after your disgrace."

Before the filing of this case, one of the followers of the Promised Messiah had filed a defamation case against the complainant in the other case. Regarding the end of these two cases he published a prophecy on 29th June 1903, about eighteen months before the final judgment in them was declared. In this prophecy it was foretold that he would be acquitted while his opponent would be punished in the case against him. The judgment of these cases was in accordance with these prophecies, for the lower court adjudged the Promised Messiah to be guilty of the charge brought against him, but the court of appeal established his innocence, while his opponent was punished.

Thus, during the eight years, 1897 to 1904, a great part of his time was taken up by the various cases in which his opponents tried to involve him criminally, but in all of which they signally failed.

It will be seen that in all these cases he was the defendant. In only one case he appeared as a plaintiff and that was a civil case. There too he was successful. In 1900 the way to his mosque and house was obstructed by certain of his relatives, and it was then under compulsion that he resorted to a civil court of justice for redress. In short, there is not a single case, civil or criminal, in which he did not come out successful, or in which his enemies achieved their object.

Visits to important cities

After that, he again paid visits to certain important towns to remove the misunderstandings created by false propaganda against him. He first went to Lahore, in September 1904, and there delivered a lecture to an audience of over ten thousand people of all classes and creeds. After that, in November 1904, he went to Sialkot where he delivered the famous lecture in

which he explained his mission to the Hindus, stating that the Hindu prophecies relating to the advent of a reformer were also fulfilled in his person. The underlying idea was clearly the unification of all the great nations of the world. Almost every nation expected the advent of a reformer in the latter days, and the fulfilment of the hopes of all nations in one person was certainly the best means of unifying them.

In October 1905 he went to Delhi where, in private gatherings, he spent about two weeks in explaining his mission. On his way back from Delhi, he stopped at Ludhiana and Amritsar and delivered lectures at both places. The lecture at Amritsar had, however, to be curtailed, owing to the interference of some fanatics, and the mob outside pelted him and his companions with stones as they left the lecture-hall. His last journey was again to Lahore, in the closing days of his life in April 1908, where he breathed his last in May in the house of Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah in Ahmadiyya Buildings. For about a month, he continued at informal meetings to explain his position to the gentry of Lahore and to other visitors. The late Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain, who was then practising as a barrister in Lahore, attended one of these meetings and asked him pointedly whether he did or did not denounce as *kafir* all those Muslims who did not accept his claims, and he gave a categorical reply in the negative.[2] At several meetings he explained that he laid no claim to prophethood, and that in his writings he had used that word in only a metaphorical sense, to imply one who made a prophecy, in which sense it had previously been used by the great Muslim Sufis.

2. About four years earlier, the same question had been put to him at Sialkot by Mian Sir Fazl-i-Husain who was then practising there. At that time, Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal also was present, and about two years ago, he bore testimony in a letter written to a friend that the same reply was given then. (*Editor's Note:* "Two years ago" refers to 1935. For further details of Iqbal's testimony, see Maulana Muhammad Ali's booklet *Sir Muhammad Iqbal's Statement re: the Qadianis.*)

Scope of writings

In the midst of all this distraction, worry and harassment, and in spite of the persecution, which sometimes took a very serious form, he went on wielding his pen with incomparable facility and added seven thousand pages of very valuable literature to the eight hundred pages written in his earlier life which had gained him the reputation of being the greatest religious writer of his time. The value of this achievement is, however, immensely enhanced when it is realised that it deals with almost all the important religions of the world — with all the offshoots of Hinduism, such as Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Sanatan Dharm and Sikhism; with Buddhism, Judaism and Baha'ism; with all the prominent sects of Islam such as the orthodox, the Shi'as, the Kharijites, the Ahl Hadith and others; and last but not least with Christianity which was his most important theme. He fought even against Atheism and Materialism.

The immense variety of the subjects dealt with is not, moreover, the only distinguishing feature of Ahmad's religious literature. It is the originality and thoroughness with which he handles every topic that marks him out as the greatest religious writer of his time. Entirely fresh light was thrown on many Islamic subjects. Islam's outlook on religion was most liberal, and the Holy Quran laid down in precise words that prophets had appeared among all nations; yet the Muslims recognised the Divine origin of only the Jewish and Christian religions. It was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who laid stress on the point that every religion had a Divine source, though its teachings may have undergone corruption in its later history, and that Divine revelation was, according to the Holy Quran, the experience not of one nation but of all nations of the world. Again, it was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who showed that, though Islam recognised the termination of prophethood in the person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, it did not mean that God had then ceased to speak to His righteous servants, because speaking is an attribute of the Divine Being and it can never cease to function.

Similarly, Ahmad threw new light on the conception of *jihad*, which was mistakenly supposed to mean "the killing of an unbeliever who did not accept Islam". This he showed to be an entirely mistaken view. *Jihad*, he showed, in the first place, conveyed the wider significance of carrying on a struggle in any field, in the broadest sense, and the struggle required for carrying to the whole world the Divine message contained in the Quran was the greatest of *jihads — "jihad-an kabir-an"*, according to the Holy Book itself. War against the unbelievers was only one phase of *jihad*, and it was allowed, he further showed, only when it was defensive.

Lecture at Conference of Religions, Lahore

Such abstruse problems as those relating to the next life, heaven and hell, reward and punishment, resurrection, the physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man, and a number of other similar matters were discussed with a freshness and originality which drew words of praise from some of the greatest thinkers of the time. He dealt fully with all these subjects in a lecture delivered at the Conference of Religions, held in Lahore in December 1896, to which a mixed audience of all religions listened with rapt attention for two days.

Ahmad was desirous of bringing about an agreement between the advocates of various religions as to the future spirit of religious controversy so as to make it least offensive to the feelings of others by the observance of certain rules in advancing objections against other religions or by utterly omitting such objections. It was for this reason that he proposed a conference of the different religions, but though the proposal was not met with acceptance from other religious leaders, the object he had in view was brought about a year later through the efforts of a Hindu gentleman, and a great religious conference was held at Lahore in December 1896. Five questions were set for solution by the representatives of different religions. Several days before the conference, Ahmad published a revelation to the effect that his paper would surpass

all others in merit and excellence, and the announcement containing this prophecy was distributed beforehand. When his paper was read out by Maulvi Abdul Karim of Sialkot, one of his leading disciples, the whole audience in one accord admitted its superiority over others. The reports of the conference published in different secular newspapers, including the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, all agreed as to its excellence. His paper was written on altogether uncontroversial lines, making no criticism of any other religion.

Later, that lecture was translated in the *Review of Religions*, and when that journal was sent to Count Tolstoy he replied that he was deeply impressed by the originality of the writer. That lecture has to this day been recognised as the most powerful exposition of the teachings of Islam.

Universality of Divine revelation

In his criticism of other religions, he was equally original and forceful. Take as an example his discussion of the different offshoots of Hinduism. To Brahmoism, which denied revelation from God, he offered his own religious experience, claiming that not only did God speak to different nations of the world through their great sages and prophets in the past (which established the fact that Divine revelation was the universal experience of all nations of the world), but also that speaking was an attribute of the Divine Being and that He spoke even now as He spoke in the past, Ahmad himself being a recipient of Divine revelation in this age. The idea of the universality of Divine revelation was, however, carried to its furthest limit when it was further explained that in its lowest form — in the form of dreams coming true and of visions — it was the universal experience of humanity.

Another modern Hindu reform movement, the Arya Samaj, arose as a revolt against Hindu idolatry and against its millions of gods, but it was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who pointed out that polytheism and multiplicity of gods was an idea so deep-rooted in Hinduism that even the Arya Samaj could not get rid of it,

and that the doctrines of co-eternity of matter and soul with the Divine Being, and the belief that they were uncreated and self-existent like God Himself, were remnants of polytheism. On Sikhism, a three hundred years old Hindu sect, he shed entirely new light by showing not only that its conception of Divine Unity and its other fundamental religious ideas were taken entirely from Islam, but also that its founder, Nanak, was actually a Muslim.

Death and crucifixion of Jesus

It was, however, in the sphere of his controversy with Christianity and in questions relating to the death and second advent of Christ, matters over which hung a pall of great mystery, that Ahmad showed masterly originality and thoroughness. Muslims and Christians both believed that Jesus Christ was alive in heaven. The former held that he was taken up alive just before the crucifixion and that his semblance was thrown upon someone else who was taken for Jesus and crucified in his place. The latter believed that Jesus himself was crucified but that he was raised to life on the third day after crucifixion and then taken up to heaven. Both further believed that he would come down to earth again before the Resurrection and destroy the Anti-Christ. The mystery surrounding Christ's death was solved by showing that, although he was nailed to the cross, he did not remain on it for a sufficiently long time to expire, that he was then taken down alive and placed in a spacious room where his wounds were attended to, that by the third day he had recovered and gained sufficient strength to be present at a secret meeting of the disciples, that he then left for Afghanistan and Kashmir where the ten lost tribes of Israel had settled, and that he ultimately died a natural death at the age of about a hundred and twenty years in Srinagar, where his tomb is still known as the tomb of Yus Asaf.

This was quite an original solution of the mystery hanging over the crucifixion and the post-crucifixion appearances of

Jesus Christ. Every link in this long chain of fresh facts was established on the basis of the Holy Quran and Hadith, of the historical elements contained in the Gospels and of other historical, ethnological and geographical evidence, which undoubtedly required immense research work. While the mystery relating to the crucifixion of Christ was thus solved, the central assumption that Jesus took away the sins of the world by his death on the cross, on which rested the whole structure of Church Christianity, was thus demolished at one stroke, and it was shown that the historical elements in the Gospels belied the religious doctrines attributed to them.

Advent of Messiah and Mahdi

A still deeper mystery hung over the second advent of Jesus. This subject was rendered the more complicated by its association with many others, such as those relating to the Anti-Christ, Gog and Magog, the coming of the Mahdi, the rising of the sun from the West and so on. Ahmad's solution of this mystery was also original. The second advent of Jesus Christ was to be taken in exactly the same sense as was the second advent of Elijah before him, which Christ himself had explained as signifying the advent of one in his spirit and power. It was a very simple explanation, yet it had never occurred to any Christian or Muslim thinker before him. The explanation of the coming of the Mahdi was also original. The Mahdi was no other than the Messiah, an idea which had never previously occurred to any Muslim in spite of the Prophet's hadith which had plainly stated that there was no Mahdi but the Messiah.

These matters having been settled, the Anti-Christ had next to be discovered. In this case too, he was original. In the Hadith, the *Dajjal* was clearly spoken of as coming forth from a church, and this gave Ahmad the clue to his discovery. The Church had indeed represented the teaching of Christ as just the opposite of what it actually was, and therefore the Church was the real Anti-Christ. The Anti-Christ being identified, there

was not much difficulty in discovering the Gog and the Magog. These were the two great races, the Teutons and the Slavs, who, as represented in this age by the English and the Russians, had become predominant in the world. The rising of the sun from the West meant, in symbolic language, the sun of Islam, whose shining in the West was bound up with the second advent of Christ. The West proper had remained unaffected by the message of Islam; it was through the Promised Messiah that the Anti-Christ had to be vanquished and the way opened for the propagation of Islam in the West.

The *Review of Religions*

All these great truths were not the laborious discoveries of a great scholar which should have taken years, though a scholar Mirza Ghulam Ahmad undoubtedly was; they blazed in upon his mind suddenly through Divine inspiration, when he was required to proclaim that Jesus Christ was dead and that he himself was the Messiah whose advent was promised in the latter days. Nor were these just the visions of a great seer. These were the grand realities, the realisation of which was the great aim of Ahmad's life. Therefore, in the midst of all those occupations and harassments to which reference has been made above, he laid with his own hands the foundations of the work of carrying the message of Islam to the West. The *Review of Religions*, a monthly magazine in English, was started in January 1902. It was the first religious magazine in English to deal with Islamic matters, and it was conducted on rational lines which appealed equally to enlightened Muslims and to non-Muslims, and was well-suited for presenting Islam to the Western mind.

The following judgment of this paper is from the pen of a very hostile writer, H.A. Walter:

> "One of the cleverest of Ahmad's followers, Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., was called to the editorship of this periodical, and at one time he was assisted by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din … This paper was

> well-named, for it has given its attention to a remarkably wide range of religions and to a great variety of subjects. Orthodox Hinduism, the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and Theosophy; Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism; Bahaism, Christian Science and Christianity have all received attention, as well as Islam in all its ramifications, both ancient and modern, such as the Shi'ites, Ahl-i-Hadis, Kharijites, Sufis and such representative exponents of modern tendencies as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Syed Amir Ali."

The *Review of Religions* had thus become the mouthpiece of the Ahmadiyya movement both for removing the misconceptions that prevailed against Islam and for making a comparative study of religion. It was a preliminary step for carrying into practice the grander ideas of establishing, in the West, Muslim missions for the propagation of Islamic literature, and of translating the Holy Quran into European languages, ideas to which Ahmad himself had given expression as early as 1891 when he claimed to be the Promised Messiah, but which were carried into effect only after his death. The translation of the Holy Quran was taken in hand within a year after his death, while the first Muslim mission in Europe was established three years afterwards.[3] These were the natural developments of the lines on which Ahmad led the movement. He had nothing to do with the minor sectarian differences among the Muslims, and prepared a band of devoted followers for the spiritual conquest of the West. The seed was sown, the men were prepared who should take care of the tender plant, and the time had come for the master to depart.

3. *Editor's Note:* The reference is to the English translation of the Holy Quran with commentary by Maulana Muhammad Ali, the first edition of which was published in 1917, and the establishment of the Woking Muslim Mission at Woking in England by Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in 1913.

7. Final Days

The last Will

The year 1905 was coming to a close when he received certain revelations to the effect that his end was nigh. On 24th December 1905, he published his last will, *Al-Wasiyya* (or *The Will*), in which he wrote at the outset:

> "As Almighty God has informed me, in various revelations following one another, that the time of my death is near, and the revelations in that respect have been so many and so consecutive that they have shaken my being to its foundations and made this life quite indifferent to me, I have therefore thought it proper that I should write down for my friends, and for such other persons as can benefit from my teachings, some words of advice."

Below are given some of these revelations:

> "The destined time of your death has drawn nigh, and We shall not leave behind you any mention which should be a source of disgrace to you. Very little has remained of the time appointed for you by your Lord… And We will either let you see a part of what We threaten them with or We will cause you to die… Very few days have remained, sorrow will overtake all on that day." [1]

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1. *Al-Wasiyya,* pp. 2–3.

A few words of comfort are added for his disciples, and they are told that the movement will prosper after his death:

> "Bear in mind, then, my friends, that it being an established Divine law that He shows two manifestations of His power so that He may thus bring to naught two false pleasures of the opponents, it is not possible that He should neglect his old law now. Be not, therefore, grieved at what I have said, and let not your hearts feel sorrow, for it is necessary for you to see a second manifestation of Divine power, and it is better for you, for it is perpetual and will not be intercepted to the day of judgment."

The arrangements for the carrying on of the movement are then suggested. The first point was initiation into the movement. While the founder was alive, he personally initiated new members into the movement. After his death, he directed that members should be initiated by the righteous from among his followers. And he wrote:

> "Such men will be elected by the agreement of the faithful. Anyone, therefore, about whom forty of the faithful should agree that he is fit to accept *bai'at* from other people in my name shall be entitled to do so, and he ought to make himself a model for others." [2]

Anjuman to carry on work after him

The second point was the management of the affairs connected with the movement, and for this an Anjuman was established with full powers to deal with all such topics. This Anjuman was formed under the name of *Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya* (or *The Chief Society of the Ahmadis*), and the rules and regulations controlling it were given under Ahmad's own signature. It began to function immediately after the publication of *The Will*, exercising full authority over all the affairs of the

2. *Ibid.,* p. 5–6.

movement, including its finances. When a dispute arose, about twenty months after the Anjuman was formed, as to the extent of its powers, and the matter was referred to the founder, he gave his decision in the following words:

> "My opinion is that any matter about which the Anjuman comes to a decision that it should be thus, such decision having been taken by a majority of votes, the same should be considered as the right decision, and the same should be the final decision. Nevertheless, I would add this much that, in certain religious matters which are related to the special object of my advent, I should be informed. I am fully confident that this Anjuman will not do anything against my wishes. This is written only by way of precaution, for it may be that the matter is one which is ordained by God in a special manner. This rule is to be observed only during my lifetime; after that, the decision of this Anjuman in all matters shall be final. — Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, 27 October 1907." [3]

The Anjuman was thus entrusted by him with the fullest powers in all affairs relating to the movement, and in his own words in *Al-Wasiyya* "the Anjuman is the successor of the Divinely-appointed *Khalifa*", the *khalifa* being the Promised Messiah himself. [4]

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad lived for two years and five months after the publication of this Will. During this time he wrote two important books, *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy,* dealing with the question of revelation granted to the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and *Chashma-i Ma'rifat,* dealing with the objections of the Arya Samaj against Islam. The latter book was published only six days before his death.

3. *Editor's Note:* The facsimile of the original Urdu hand-written note has been published in books several times.

4. *Al-Wasiyya,* Appendix, Clause number 13.

Message of peace

As already noted, in April 1908 he went to Lahore. There his speeches were listened to by leading Muslims and Hindus and made a deep impression. Eager Muslim listeners wondered when they heard from his own lips that he was not a claimant to prophethood and that he laid claim only to being a recipient of Divine revelation like the great Muslim sages and *mujaddids* of the past. While occupied from day to day in explaining his position to Muslims, he also began writing a pamphlet containing a special message for his Hindu countrymen, aiming at bringing about lasting union between the Hindus and the Muslims. The message was based on the broad Quranic principle which he had been preaching all his life that all religions emanated from a Divine source, as the Holy Quran clearly said:

> "And there is not a nation but a warner has gone among them" (35:24).

In accordance with this verse, he held that prophets must have appeared in India, and as Rama and Krishna were the two great reformers recognised by the Hindus, they must have been the prophets sent to that people. He called upon the Hindus to reciprocate the Muslim recognition of the Hindu prophets by recognising the prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. If they did that, a lasting peace could be achieved between the Hindus and the Muslims, in which case he and his followers were prepared to make a further concession to Hindu religious sentiment by giving up their lawful right of slaughtering cows and using beef as an article of food. This message was aptly named the *Message of Peace,* and it proved to be his last message.

Founder's demise

At the age of seventy-three, he was still wielding his pen in the cause of Islam with the energy of a man of thirty. He had just finished the last lines of his *Message of Peace*, outlining the possible basis of an everlasting peace between the Hindus and

the Muslims, when suddenly he fell ill at 10 p.m. on the evening of 25th May, with an attack of diarrhoea, to which he succumbed at 10 a.m. on the morning of 26th May 1908 in the house of Dr. Syed Muhammad Husain Shah at Ahmadiyya Buildings.[5] The Civil Surgeon of Lahore certified that death was not due to an infectious disease, and it was on the production of this certificate that the authorities permitted the carrying of his body to Qadian, where it was consigned to its last resting-place on 27th May.

Mysteries unravelled

Thus ended an eventful life which in the short space of eighteen years — 1890 to 1908 — not only had revolutionised many of the existing religious ideas but had even taken definite steps in an entirely new direction — the presenting of Islam to, and the spiritual conquest of, the West. Deep religious mysteries which had baffled human minds for centuries had been unravelled. The second advent of Christ, the tribulation of the Anti-Christ, the prevalence of Gog and Magog, the coming of the Mahdi and similar other topics were mysteries which affected the two great religions of the world, Christianity and Islam, both contending for the mastery of the world, and an inspired man was indeed needed to lift the veil from the face of these mysteries. Such a man was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. He was gifted not only with inspiration to elucidate the deepest mysteries, but also with the faith and energy which enabled him to give a new direction to the dissemination of Islam, which had hitherto found the West deaf to its message. Christianity was out to conquer the Muslim world; in temporal matters it had ousted Islam, but in the spiritual domain Mirza Ghulam Ahmad made a bold start and gave a challenge to Christianity in its very home. It is as a result of that challenge that mosques are being built in the great centres of Christianity, that a vital change is being brought about in the attitude of

5. *Editor's Note:* Ahmadiyya Buildings later became the centre of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement after the Split in 1914.

Europe towards Islam, and that thousands of cultured and advanced Europeans are finding a haven of peace under its banner.

Habits and nature

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was very simple in his habits. His diet and his clothing were models of simplicity. He never gave much attention to the one or much time to the other. For a long time he used to dine with his friends and guests for both the main meals of the day. His hospitality was the proverbial hospitality of the Orient. If necessary, he would leave his own compartments to lodge a guest. When bidding farewell to a friend or visitor he would sometimes accompany him on foot even two or three miles.

He could concentrate his attention on the subject before him to such an extent that he was quite unaware of what was going on near him. Sometimes children, playing round about him, made a great noise but they could not disturb him. If personally provoked, he was never angry. He was not even severe on anyone for not having done something according to his instructions. The little dishonesties of domestic servants he always passed over. When someone complained to him of the dishonesty of a servant in some trivial matter, he replied that high morals could not be expected of them and that one must learn to bear with them. He was very patient and forbearing. Abused face to face when sitting with his guests and friends, he would only ask his friends to remain silent.

Often someone would go on for hours reciting his story or reading some paper which he had written, and Ahmad would listen to it with patience, however devoid of interest it might be. Among his disciples he sat like an ordinary man, and a newcomer could not recognize him from his position. He was very kind to his friends and so regardful of the tie of friendship that he was never the first to break it.

Even during his court cases he was never remiss in his duty to God. When the prayer time came, he never knew any other

business. Often the case would come up for hearing while he was engaged in his devotions. It was in the law suits of his early life, which he conducted in obedience to his father, that his love for truth became known to all concerned. Not for the sake of any interest would he allow a word of falsehood to pass his lips. For this he had become so famous that even his opponents in these cases were conscious of it.

Under trials and difficulties his fortitude was remarkable. When involved in such a serious case as that instituted by Dr. Clarke, no one could discover any expression of anxiety on his face. He was sometimes severe on his opponents, but only when their attack was on religion. Never did a personal attack provoke him.

8. Not a Prophet

His claim misunderstood

Every great man has been misunderstood to a certain extent, and so has Ahmad. The most serious of these misunderstandings is that which states that he claimed to be a prophet. This charge was laid against him by his opponents when he first claimed to be the Promised Messiah, and a section of his followers, the Qadianis, have now joined hands with them in bringing discredit upon his movement. We have already noted, while discussing his claims, that he claimed to be a *mujaddid* in 1882, and that his claim to Promised Messiahship was advanced in 1891. It was on the occasion of the latter claim that he was charged by his opponents with laying claim to prophethood, and he forthwith denounced that as a false charge, declaring definitely and unmistakably that he had never claimed to be a prophet, that he believed in the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the final Prophet, and that he looked upon any claimant to prophethood after him as a liar. A few quotations from his writings have already been given (see chapter 5). After reading those statements, no one can honestly attribute to him a claim to prophethood.

How then did the misunderstanding arise? When Ahmad laid claim to Promised Messiahship on the ground of his being the like of Jesus Christ, an objection was brought forward that Jesus Christ was a prophet and that none but a prophet could be his like. The following answer to this objection is met with in the first book in which a claim to Promised Messiahship is advanced:

> "Here, if it is objected that the like of Jesus must also be a prophet because Jesus was a prophet, the reply to this in the first place is that our Lord and Master [Prophet Muhammad] has not laid it down that the coming Messiah shall be a prophet; nay, he has made it clear that he shall be a Muslim and shall be bound by the law of Islam like ordinary Muslims … Besides this, there is no doubt that I have come as a *muhaddath* from God, and *muhaddath* is, in one sense, a prophet, though he does not possess perfect prophethood; but still he is partially a prophet, for he is endowed with the gift of being spoken to by God, matters relating to the unseen are revealed to him, and, like the revelation of prophets and messengers, his revelation is kept free from the interference of the devil, and the kernel of the law is disclosed to him, and he is commissioned just like the prophets, and like prophets it is incumbent on him that he should announce his claim at the top of his voice." [1]

Denial of prophethood

It should be borne in mind that in the terminology of the Islamic law a *muhaddath* is a righteous person who is not a prophet but who is spoken to by God. When confronted with the objection that he claimed to be the like of Jesus but that Jesus was a prophet, and therefore his like must also be a prophet, Ahmad offered the above explanation, the gist of which is that he was a *muhaddath* and that the *muhaddath* was, in one sense, a prophet, though his prophethood was partial and not perfect. It was this statement which was misinterpreted by his opponents as a claim to prophethood, and, on this basis, he was denounced as a *kafir* or heretic. To remove the misunderstanding, he emphatically denied again and again that he was a claimant to prophethood and emphasised that he claimed to be only a *muhaddath*:

1. *Tauzih Maram*, pp. 17–18.

"There is no claim to being a prophet but a claim to being a *muhaddath,* and this claim has been advanced by the command of Allah." [2]

"…I lay no claim whatever to actual prophethood.… wherever the word *nabi* (prophet) is used in my writings, it should be taken as meaning *muhaddath*, and the word *nabi* (prophet) should be regarded as having been blotted out." [3]

"It does not befit God that He should send a prophet after the *Khatam-un-nabiyyin,* or that He should re-start the system of prophethood after having terminated it. … I am not a prophet but a *muhaddath* from God, and a recipient of Divine revelation so that I may re-vitalise the religion of the Holy Prophet." [4]

"One of the objections of those who call me a *kafir* is that I lay claim to prophethood and say that I am a prophet. The reply to this is that it should be known that I have not laid claim to prophethood, nor have I said that I am a prophet, but these people have made haste to make a mistake in understanding my words … I have said nothing to these people except what I have written in my books, that I am a *muhaddath* and that God speaks to me as He speaks to a *muhaddath* … and what right have I that I should lay claim to prophethood and get out of the pale of Islam?" [5]

"These people have not understood my words and they say that I am a claimant to prophethood, and this allegation of theirs is a clear lie." [6]

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2. *Izala Auham*, pp. 421–422. This is quoted more fully in chapter 5.

3. See *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* 1986 edition, vol. 1, pp. 312–314 (*Editor*). This is quoted more fully in chapter 5.

4. *Ainah Kamalat Islam,* p. 377 and p. 383.

5. *Hamamat-ul-Bushra*, p. 79.

6. *Ibid.,* p. 81.

> "I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Last of the Prophets (*Khatam-ul-anbiya*), and after him no prophet shall come for this nation (*umma*), neither new nor old. … Of course, those who are *muhaddath* will come, who will be spoken to by God ... I am one of these." [7]

These are only a very few of the numerous statements made by Ahmad clearly denying any claim to prophethood. It is further explained in these statements that, when he called the *muhaddath* "in one sense a prophet", he was using the word *prophet* in a literal sense, not in its proper or technical sense, and this is also called a metaphorical use of the word. It was the height of folly on the part of his opponents, and no less is it on the part of his followers belonging to the Qadian section, to take the word in a real sense when the person who uses it expressly states it to have been used in a metaphorical sense. This position he maintained to the last. Thus, in one of his last writings, *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, published less than a year before his death, he wrote:

> "This servant does not say anything but what the Holy Prophet said, and he does not go a single step out of his guidance; and he says that God has called him a prophet by His revelation, and I have been called so by the tongue of our Messenger, Mustafa; and he means nothing by prophethood but that he is frequently spoken to by God… and we do not mean by prophethood what is meant by it in the former Scriptures." [8]

> "And God does not mean by my prophethood anything but being frequently spoken to by Him, and the curse of God is on him who intends anything more than this … and our Messenger is the last of the prophets and the chain of messengers has come to an end in him …

7. *Nishan Asmani,* p. 28
8. *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy*, Arabic Supplement, p. 16.

> and nothing remains after him but being frequently spoken to by God, and that, too, on condition of being a follower of his … and I have been called a prophet of God in a metaphorical sense, not in the real sense." [9]

These few quotations should set all doubts at rest with regard to Ahmad's alleged claim to prophethood. He claimed to be only a *muhaddath*, but, as the word *nabi* (prophet) occurred in some of his revelations, as also in a hadith of the Holy Prophet in relation to the coming Messiah, he explained that it was used metaphorically, not in the real sense of the word, and that metaphorically a *muhaddath* could be called a prophet because he was spoken to by God. Therefore, wherever he used the word "prophet" regarding himself, it was in a metaphorical sense. Never did he mean by it that he was a prophet in the real sense of the word, but only that he was spoken to by God; and that God speaks to His servants in this *umma* is a fact generally admitted by all Muslims.

Sufi terminology

The one theme of all the writings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is the superiority of Islam over all other religions because of the continuity of the gift of revelation in this religion. It is on this point that his earlier as well as later writings lay particular stress, and not the least change is observable in his views on this point. In the terminology of the Sufis of Islam, when a person attains to what is called *fana* (self-extinction) in following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, he is granted the gift of revelation in abundance and he becomes a *buruz* (manifestation) of the Holy Prophet. This stage is variously termed *zilli, buruzi, majazi, juz'i,* or *naqis* prophethood. The word *zill* means a 'shadow' or an 'image', *buruz* means an 'appearance' or 'manifestation', *majaz* means 'metaphorical', *juz'* means a 'part', and *naqis* means 'imperfect'. These terms have also been used by the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. The

9. *Ibid*., pp. 64–65.

idea underlying all these phrases is one and the same. It is not prophethood in the true sense but the *appearance* of some qualities of prophethood in a person who is not a prophet, hence he is called a *buruz;* and as through him are *imaged* certain characteristics of prophethood he is called a *zill* or image of the original; he is a prophet not in the true sense of the word but in a *metaphorical* sense (*majaz*); and he receives only *a part* of what constitutes prophethood or an imperfect prophethood because the revelation of prophecies is only a secondary work of a prophet. The primary work of a prophet is the making known of the Divine will or religious truths for the guidance of man, and as all religious truths necessary for the guidance of man have been revealed in the Holy Quran, a prophet cannot come after the Holy Prophet.

Ahmad himself thus explains *zilli nubuwwat* as follows in *Haqiqat-ul-Wahy:*

> "But *zilli nubuwwat,* the significance of which is receiving revelation simply by the grace of Muhammad, shall continue to the Day of Judgment, so that the door to the perfection of men may not be closed." — p. 28

That a *zilli* prophet is not actually a prophet is also clear from the fact that in a saying of the Holy Prophet a king is called *zillullah* or the *zill* of God. As *zillullah* is not actually God so a *zilli* prophet is not actually a prophet. This point was very lucidly put forth by him in a book called *Mawahib-ur-Rahman* published in January 1903:

> "God speaks to His saints (*auliya*) in this *umma*, and they are given the semblance of prophets, and they are not really prophets, for the Quran has made perfect the needs of Law." — p. 66

9. Jihad

Doctrine of Jihad not abrogated

Another charge against the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement is that he denied the doctrine of *jihad*. It is easy to see that anyone who accepts the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad cannot deny *jihad*, injunctions relating to which occupy a considerable portion of the Holy Quran. The orthodox Muslims believe that some verses of the Holy Quran have been abrogated by others. The Ahmadiyya movement has long been fighting against this doctrine, and many enlightened Muslims now accept the Ahmadi view that no verse, not even one word or one jot of the Holy Quran was abrogated. Under the heading, *A statement of some of our beliefs,* the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement wrote:

> "God speaks to His saints (*auliya*) in this *umma*, and they are given the semblance of prophets, and they are not really prophets, for the Quran has made perfect the needs of Law, and they are given only an understanding of the Quran, and they cannot add to, or detract from it anything; and whoever adds to, or detracts from it, he is of the devils who are wicked." [1]

It is therefore impossible that, holding such a belief, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad could say that he abrogated *jihad*, which was made obligatory by the Holy Quran and which was one of the basic teachings of Islam. I quote a passage from his pamphlet

1. *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, pp. 66–67.

entitled *The Jihad* to show that he differed from the *ulama* only in his interpretation of *jihad* as inculcated by the Holy Quran:

> "It should be remembered that the doctrine of *jihad* as understood by the Muslim *ulama* of our day, who call themselves Maulvis, is not true … These people are so persistent in their belief, which is entirely wrong and against the Quran and Hadith, that the man who does not believe in it and is against it is called a *Dajjal*." [2]

Misconceptions about Jihad

It would appear from this that, according to the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, the doctrine of *jihad* as understood by the *ulama* was opposed to the true teachings of the Holy Quran and Hadith. What Ahmad rejected was not the doctrine of *jihad* but the orthodox interpretation of it, which had given rise in the West to grave misconceptions regarding the doctrine of *jihad*, so that even unprejudiced Western writers thought the word *jihad* to be synonymous with war undertaken for forcing the religion of Islam upon non-Muslims. Thus, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the article on *Jihad* opens with the following words: "The spread of Islam by arms is a religious duty upon Muslims in general".[3] Klein, in his *Religion of Islam*, makes an even more sweeping statement: "Jihad … The fighting against unbelievers with the object of either winning them over to Islam, or subduing and exterminating them in case they refuse to become Muslims." [4]

In the Muslim popular mind there was an even greater misconception, that the killing of an unbeliever was *jihad* and that such an act entitled the perpetrator to be called a *ghazi*. This conception, coupled with the prevailing belief in the advent of a Mahdi who would put all non-Muslims to the sword if they refused to accept Islam, opposed as it was to the

2. *The Jihad*, pp. 5–6.

3. *Encyclopædia of Islam,* E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1913–38.

4. Frederick Augustus Klein, *The Religion of Islam,* London, 1906.

plain teachings of the Holy Quran, was doing immense harm to the cause of the spread of Islam among non-Muslims. With very few exceptions, even educated Muslims were victims of the wrong impression that Islam enjoined aggressive war against non-believers, and the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement had to carry on incessant war, not against *jihad* as inculcated by the Holy Quran, but against the false conceptions of it prevalent among both Muslims and non-Muslims.

War to spread religion never allowed

The way was cleared for removing these misconceptions by establishing two principles:

1. That *jihad* means *exerting oneself to the extent of one's ability and power, whether it is by word or deed*, and that the word is used in this broad sense in the Holy Quran;

2. That when it is used in the narrower sense of *fighting*, it means fighting only in self-defence.

If, therefore, all exertions to carry the message of Islam to non-Muslims by simple preaching, or what may be called spiritual warfare, fell within the purview of *jihad*, a war carried on for the propagation of Islam, if such a one was ever undertaken by a Muslim ruler, was quite outside the scope of its true significance, as it was against the basic principle laid down in the Holy Quran that "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). If Ahmad ever spoke of the abrogation of *jihad*, it was of this misconception of the word *jihad*, not of the *jihad* as inculcated by the Holy Quran, every word of which he believed to be a Divine revelation which could not be abrogated till the day of judgment. Here is another passage from the pamphlet quoted above:

> "Their contention that, since *jihad* was permitted in the early days [of Islam], there is no reason why it should be prohibited now is entirely misconceived. It may be refuted in two ways; firstly, that this inference is drawn

> from wrong premises and our Holy Prophet never used the sword against any people, except those who first took up the sword [against the Muslims] … secondly, that, even if we suppose for the sake of argument that there was such a *jihad* in Islam as these Maulvis think, even so that order does not stand now, for it is written that, when the Promised Messiah appears, there will be an end of *jihad* with the sword and of religious wars." [5]

It will be seen that the prevalent idea that Islam allowed a *jihad* for the spread of religion is refuted in two ways. In the first place, it is stated that this conception of *jihad* is against the Holy Quran and Hadith, as the Holy Prophet raised the sword only in self-defence, not for the propagation of religion. Further, it is added that, even if for the sake of argument it is supposed that a *jihad* for the propagation of religion was ever undertaken — that such was never undertaken by the Holy Prophet has been definitely stated in the first part — such *jihad* cannot be undertaken now, for it is said of the Promised Messiah that he will put down (religious) wars, "*yaz' al-harb*", as plainly stated in Bukhari. What is aimed at is really this, that a *jihad* contrary to the teachings of the Holy Quran and to the practice of the Holy Prophet, if ever there was one, was undoubtedly the result of some misconception, and, according to the hadith quoted above, the Promised Messiah will remove that misconception and thus put an end to such wars.

Conditions of Jihad

This position is made still more clear in an Arabic letter, addressed to the Muslims of the world, and forming a supplement to his book, *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*. In this letter he says:

> "There is not the least doubt that the conditions laid down for *jihad* [in the Holy Quran] are not to be met with at the present time and in this country; so it is illegal for the Muslims to fight for [the propagation of]

5. *The Jihad*, p. 6.

> religion and to kill anyone who rejects the Sacred Law, for God has made clear the illegality of *jihad* when there is peace and security." [6]

It is here made clear that *jihad* with the sword is allowed by Islam only under certain conditions, and, as those conditions are not met with at the present time in the country in which the writer lives, therefore *jihad* with the sword is illegal here at the present time. This argument leads to the definite conclusion that *jihad* may be legal in another country in which exist the necessary conditions laid down in the Holy Quran, or even here when the conditions have changed. These conditions are expressly stated in the Holy Book: "And fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, and be not aggressive, for God does not love the aggressors" (2:191).

Muslims expressed loyalty to British rule

In this connection may be mentioned another charge relative to his attitude towards the British Government in India. As stated at the beginning of this book, the Sikhs, who ruled the Punjab before the advent of the British rule, had not only ousted Ahmad's family from their estate, but, in their later days, there was such lawlessness in the country as made life impossible for the Muslims, who were not allowed the free exercise of their religion and whose very culture was on the verge of being swept away. It was at such a time that the British Government stepped in and saved the Muslims from annihilation. Thus, people who with their own eyes had seen the woes of the Muslims, or even their descendants, considered the British Government as a blessing, for through it they were saved.

For allowing full liberty of religion and conscience and for establishing peace where before there were anarchy and lawlessness, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was not alone in praising the English rule. All writers of that time considered it their duty to give vent to similar expressions of loyalty and thankfulness.

6. *Tuhfa Golarwiyya*, Supplement, p. 30.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who occupied a position among the Muslims which has not been vouchsafed to any other leader since his time, wrote exactly in the same strain as did Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Even the Wahabis, who remained for a long time in the bad books of the Government, declared from the housetops their loyalty to the Government. Thus wrote Maulvi Muhammad Jabbar, the famous Wahabi leader:

> "Before all, I thank the Government under which we can publicly and with the beat of drums teach the religious doctrines of our pure faith without any interference whatsoever, and we can pay back our opponents, whether they are Christians or others, in their own coin. Such religious liberty we cannot have even under the Sultan of Turkey." [7]

Another famous *Ahl Hadith* leader, Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala, wrote:

> "Considering the Divine Law and the present condition of the Muslims, we have said that this is not the time of the sword." [8]

Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, another great leader and writer, went even further:

> "A perusal of historical books shows that the peace, security and liberty which all people have received under this rule have never been obtained under any other rule." [9]
>
> "Whoever goes against it [i.e., loyalty and faithfulness to the British rule], not only is a mischief-maker in the eyes of the rulers, but he shall also be farthest from what Islam requires and from the way of the faithful, and he shall be regarded as a violator of the covenant,

7. *Barakat-i-Islam*, Title page, 2.

8. *Isha'at-us-Sunna*, Safar, 1301 A.H., p. 366.

9. *Tarjuman Wahabia*, p. 8.

> unfaithful in his religion and a perpetrator of the greatest sin, and what his condition will be on the day of judgment will become evident there." [10]

There was another reason why Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had to lay special stress on loyalty to the British rule. He claimed to be the Promised Mahdi, and, as the name of Mahdi was associated with the sword, the Government for many years regarded the Ahmadiyya movement with distrust, thinking that the founder might at any time rise in revolt against it. It was to remove this wrong impression that Ahmad laid much stress on his faithfulness to the British rule. Moreover, he was laying the foundations of a missionary society with the grand aim of spreading Islam throughout the world, and such a society could do its work only by remaining loyal to the Government established by law in any country and by remaining aloof from all political agitation.

10. *Ibid*., pp. 23–24.

10. Charge of attacking Jesus

Vituperative Christian propaganda against Islam

Another charge against the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement is that he makes slanderous attacks on the blessed person of Christ. This again is a gross misrepresentation of what he wrote. How can a man who professes the faith of Islam abuse a prophet of God, when he is required to believe in that prophet? Jesus Christ is expressly mentioned in the Holy Quran as a prophet, and every Muslim must honour him as such.

In order to understand the nature of the writings to which objection is taken, two points must be clearly borne in mind. The first is the nature of the controversy which was carried on by the Christian missionaries in India, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The preaching of the Christian missionary until a short time ago was of a quite different character from what it is today. In those days, the Christian missionary was under the impression that the darker the picture he drew of the Prophet of Islam, the greater would be his success in winning over converts from among the Muslims; and this impression became stronger as the missionary reviewed the results. Not only some well-to-do people from among the Muslims but even some Maulvis of great repute went over to the Christian camp, and to win the favour of their European masters these new disciples carried the vituperative propaganda against Islam to an extreme which made the Muslim blood boil. Some of the Christian controversial books of those days must indeed be ranked as the filthiest religious literature that has ever been produced, apart from the fact that the founder of the Arya

Samaj and some of his blind votaries imitated the Christian missionary, and, later on, the Arya Samajist preacher even surpassed the Christian missionary in the art of vituperation.

It is difficult even to conceive today how all those things could be written in the name of religion. *Al-Masih al-Dajjal* by Ramchand (1873), *Sirat-ul-Masih wal Muhammad* by Rev. Thakurdas (1882), *Andruna Bible* by Abdullah Atham, in which an attempt has been made to show that our Holy Prophet was the Anti-Christ and the Dragon of the Revelation, *Muhammad Ki Tawarikh Ka Ijmal* by Rev. William (1891), *Taftish-ul-Islam* by Rev. Rodgers (1870), *Nabiyy Ma'thum* published by the American Mission Press of Ludhiana (1884), and dozens of other books and hundreds of tracts, are all strings of abusive epithets heaped upon the Holy Prophet and his companions, each writer trying to outdo the others in scurrility. To call the Holy Prophet an impostor, *Dajjal* or Anti-Christ, a deceiver, a robber, the slave of his sensual passions whose lust knew no bounds, and to attribute every conceivable crime to him became a habit with these Christian controversialists. Page after page of the writings named above and of others of the same type are full of such descriptions as the following:

> "If he [the Prophet of Islam] abrogated the Gospels there is no wonder, for all those who are bent low on the world and are worshippers of lust do like this."
>
> "Sensual lust … is to be met with in Muhammad to an excessive degree so that he was always its slave. Muhammad, like other Arabs, from his very appearance seems to be a lover of women."
>
> "The occasion of the law relating to marriage with an adopted son's wife was the flaming of the lust of Muhammad on seeing Zainab naked."
>
> "The religion of the Pope and the religion of Muhammad are two jaws of the Dragon."

> "Ring-leader of thieves, a robber, a killer of people by secret conspiracies."
>
> "When by chance his eye caught glance of her beauty, sinful love took possession of his heart, and to have his wicked desire fulfilled he arranged to get permission from Heaven."
>
> "We cannot give any name to his claim to prophethood except fraud or cunning."
>
> "All this is the fabrication of Muhammad; he was a slave of his passions."
>
> "His character in no way befits the office of a prophet; he was a slave of his passions, full of the spirit of revenge and a selfish man, an extreme follower of his low desires. The Quran is a falsehood, his own fabrication, which encouraged his slavery to passion and his lust."
>
> "His speech and his ways increased in wickedness with his age."

This is only a sample of the writings of the Christian missionaries of those days. In fact, so scurrilous was this literature growing that, when Rev. Imad-ud-Din, a Maulvi who had become a convert to Christianity, published his writings, they were found to be so grossly abusive that even Christians began to complain of them, and the *Shams-ul-Akbar* of Lucknow, itself a Christian missionary paper, was compelled to give a warning against the offensiveness of Imad-ud-Din's writings, saying that "if there was again a mutiny like that of 1857, it would be due to the abusive and scurrilous language of his writings".

Muslims' love for the Prophet

There was not the least exaggeration in the warning given by this Christian paper. The Muslim is never so offended as when his Prophet is abused. He can submit to the greatest insult, but

the one thing to which he will not submit is the abuse of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Recent years have brought before us many instances of this deep-rooted love of the Muslim for his Prophet. How many young Muslims have lost their mental balance and turned a revolver against the reviler of the Prophet, knowing fully well that they must pay for this with their lives? Nobody can gauge the depth of the love of a Muslim for his Prophet. It is a fact that the sting of the Prophet's abuse affects the Muslim's heart so deeply that he gets excited beyond all measure, and cognisance of this fact should be taken by the highest executive authority, even if the High Courts of Justice cannot give a more liberal interpretation to the law of the land and must inflict a death penalty on youths who have become mentally unbalanced by such excitement.

Criticism directed at the "imaginary Messiah"

It would have been no wonder if the highly scurrilous tenor of Christian controversialists had excited a Muslim defender of the Faith like the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement to such an extent that he made remarks unworthy of himself and of the cause which he supported. Nevertheless, he kept his mental balance and adopted a method of controversy which, within a very short time, made the Christian missionaries realise that their methods needed changing, and this is the second point which must be borne in mind. It was a simple method. What would be the picture of Jesus Christ if he were criticised and found fault with in the manner in which the Christian missionaries criticised and found fault with the Holy Prophet of Islam? In fact, nothing short of this could make the Christian missionary realise how deeply he was offending the Muslim feeling. Therefore, when Ahmad first adopted this method, he wrote in plain words:

> "As the Rev. Fateh Masih of Fatehgarh in the Gurdaspur district has written to us a very scurrilous letter, and in it he has accused our Lord and Master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, of adultery, and has used about

> him many other scurrilous words by the way of abuse, it is, therefore, advisable that a reply to his letter should be published. This pamphlet has therefore been written. I hope that Christian missionaries will read it carefully and will not be offended by its words, for this method is entirely the result of the harsh words and filthy abuse of Fateh Masih. Still, we have every regard for the sacred glory of Jesus Christ, and in return for the abusive words of Fateh Masih, only an imaginary Messiah (*farzi Masih*) has been spoken of, and even that is out of dire necessity." [1]

This position was again and again made clear by Ahmad in his writings, but interested persons carry on false propaganda, ignoring the explanation. Thus M. Zafar Ali Khan of *Zamindar* attributes the following words to Ahmad:

> "Jesus Christ was evil-minded and overbearing. He was the enemy of the righteous. We cannot call him even a gentleman, much less a prophet (*Anjam Atham*, p. 9)."

Anyone who refers to page 9 of the book referred to will find that the writer is guilty of making a false allegation. The passage as met with in the book runs thus:

> "In the same way, the impious Fateh Masih has, in his letter to me, called our Holy Prophet adulterer and has abused him in many other ways. Thus this filthy section … compel us to write something about their Yasu [Jesus], and let the Muslims know that God has not made any mention of this Yasu in the Holy Quran. The Christian missionaries say that Yasu was that person who claimed to be God and called Holy Moses a thief and a cheat, and disbelieved in the advent of the Holy Prophet, and said that after him only false prophets would come. We cannot call such an evil-

1. *Nur-ul-Quran* No. 2, p. 1.

> minded, overbearing person, and the enemy of the righteous, a gentleman — still less a prophet."

Between the quotation given by M. Zafar Ali Khan and the passage actually found in the book, there is the difference between heaven and earth. The founder of the Ahmadiyya movement never wrote that Jesus Christ was evil-minded and overbearing. On the other hand, adhering to the principle which he had made clear in *Nur-ul-Quran*, as quoted above, he merely tells his opponent, Fateh Masih, that the imaginary Messiah of the Christians (*farzi Masih*), who is not the same as the Messiah of the Holy Quran (the real Messiah), may, on the basis of the Christian writings, be described as an evil-minded and overbearing person, *if* the method of criticism adopted by the Christians in the case of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, whom they called an adulterer, was to be followed in the case of their Christ. It is the imaginary picture of the Messiah which the Christian missionary has drawn that is condemned by the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, and not the Messiah himself. Now, according to the Muslim faith, if a man calls himself God and also denounces the righteous servants of God as being thieves and cheats, he is undoubtedly an overbearing and evil-minded man. The Muslims believe, and so did the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, that Jesus Christ never said he was God, and he never denounced the other righteous servants of God; therefore they hold that the picture of the Messiah drawn by the Christians is not the picture of a man who actually lived, but that of one who exists only in the Christian imagination. It is this imaginary picture which Ahmad denounces, and that, too, he did merely because the Christian missionaries would not refrain from abusing the Holy Prophet of Islam.

It should be borne in mind that this method of paying back the Christian missionaries in their own coin was adopted by other recognised Muslim leaders before the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. Thus, Maulana Rahmatullah writes in the introduction to his book, *Izalat-ul-Auham*:

> "As the Christian missionaries are disrespectful in their speeches and writings towards the best of men, our Holy Prophet, and towards the Holy Quran and Hadith of the Prophet … so we have been compelled to pay them back in the same coin … By no means is it my belief that I should speak of a prophet in disparaging terms." [2]

Very recently, even the official organ of the *Jami'at-ul-'Ulama of Delhi, al-Jami'iyya*, dated 20th November 1932, wrote in reply to certain Christian missionaries:

> "The person whom the Christians erroneously take for the Messiah was really the enemy of the Messiah and he has nothing to do with Islam and the Quran. Nor does any Muslim believe in him."

Further false propaganda

Another example of how false propaganda is being carried on against the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement is the statement published very widely by M. Zafar Ali Khan in his paper, the *Zamindar*, bearing the heading, "An open letter to the King of England", in which he states that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad accused Mary of adultery and called Christ a bastard. When he was challenged to produce a single quotation in support of this statement, he remained silent, though he continued to repeat the false allegation. It is clear on the face of it that a Muslim who believed in the Holy Quran could not make such a wild statement as that attributed to the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, but the public is being fed on these lies by the sworn enemies of the movement. Far from accusing Mary of adultery and calling Jesus a bastard, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad again and again speaks of the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ. The following three quotations will suffice for this purpose:

2. *Izalat-ul-Auham,* Preface, p. 5.

> "One of the doctrines we hold is that Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were both born miraculously … And the secret in creating Jesus and John in this manner was the manifestation of a great sign … And the first thing He [God] did to bring this about was the creation of Jesus without a father through the manifestation of Divine power only." [3]

> "The ground on which this is based is his [Jesus Christ's] creation without the agency of a human father, and the detail of this is that a certain section of the Jews, i.e., the Sadducees, were deniers of the Resurrection, so God informed them through some of His prophets that a son from among their community would be born without a father, and this would be a sign of the truth of the Resurrection." [4]

> "The [Arya Samajist] lecturer also objected to Mary bearing a child by the Holy Spirit and to Jesus being born from Mary alone. The reply is that this was done by the same God who, according to the Arya Samaj teachings, creates millions of people in the beginning of every new creation, just as vegetables grow out of the earth. If, according to the Vedic teachings, God has created the world millions of times, nay times without number, in this manner, and there was no need that men and women should unite together in order that a child should be born, where is the harm if Jesus Christ was born similarly?" [5]

The above quotations should be sufficient to convince even the greatest enemy of the movement that its founder sincerely believed that Jesus Christ was born of Mary without her coming into union with a male. Ahmad not only states his own

3. *Mawahib-ur-Rahman*, pp. 70–72.

4. *Hamamat-ul-Bushra*, p. 90.

5. *Chashma Ma'rifat*, p. 217.

belief on this matter, but he replies to the objections of the Arya Samaj, and lays stress on the point that Jesus Christ was born without a human father. How could he then accuse Mary of adultery when he states again and again that she had not even a lawful union with a man before the birth of Jesus Christ? In the face of these clear statements, to say that he regarded Mary as having committed adultery or that he called Jesus Christ a bastard is a bare-faced lie, yet it is stuff such as this that the public is expected to take, and actually takes, for literal truth.

11. Disservice of the *Ulama*

***Ulama* abuse the Promised Messiah**

Another charge against Ahmad is that, in his dealings with the orthodox *ulama*, he was very severe. As a matter of fact, the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, in this case also, paid back the opposing *ulama* in their own coin. No sooner had he announced that Jesus Christ was dead and that he himself was the Messiah who was to appear among the Muslims than they denounced him in the most scurrilous terms and applied to him every hateful epithet which they could think of. The following are only a few examples taken from the pages of *Isha'at-us-Sunna*, a periodical issued by Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala, which had become the mouthpiece of the *ulama*:

> Hidden enemy of Islam; The second Musailima; *Dajjal*; a liar; a cheat; accursed one; he should have his face blackened, and a rope should be tied round his neck and a necklace of shoes put over him, and in this condition he should be carried through the towns of India; a satan, a evil-doer; *Zindeeq;* most shameless; worse than *Dajjal*; has the manners of ruffians and scavengers, nay those of beasts and savages; progeny of Halaku Khan and Changez Khan, the unbelieving Turks, this shows that you are really a…

The literature produced against Ahmad teemed with such scurrilous epithets, and even worse than these; no abusive word could be thought of which was not applied to him merely because he claimed to be the Promised Messiah. In addition to this, *fatwas* were issued against the founder and the members

of the Ahmadiyya movement, declaring them to be too polluted to set foot in a mosque, declaring even their dead bodies to be unfit for a Muslim graveyard, and pronouncing their marriages to be illegal and their property to be lawful spoil for others, so that it was no sin to take it away by any means.

Ulama as described in Hadith

It was *ulama* of this type whom the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement sometimes dealt with severely, and, if he occasionally made a retort in kind and gave a bad name to such irresponsible people who had lost all sense of propriety and decency, he could not be blamed according to any moral code. Thus he writes in one of his latest books:

> "Those *ulama* of the latter days whom the Holy Prophet has called the *Yahud* [Jews] of this *umma* are particularly those Maulvis who are opponents of the Promised Messiah and are his sworn enemies and who are doing everything possible to bring him to naught and call him *kafir*, unbeliever and *Dajjal* … But those *ulama* who do not belong to this category, we cannot call them the *Yahud* of this *umma*." [1]

Elsewhere, explaining his attitude, he says:

> "This our description of them does not apply to the righteous but to the mischievous among them." [2]

It cannot be denied that a certain class of *ulama* is spoken of in very strong words in Hadith itself. Thus, in one hadith, the *ulama* of the latter days are described as "the worst of all under the canopy of heaven", and it is added: "From among them would the tribulation come forth and into them would it turn back" (*Baihaqi*). According to another hadith, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

1. *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, Part 5, Supplement, p. 114, footnote.
2. *Al-Huda*, p. 68, footnote.

> "There will come upon my *umma* a time of great trial, and the people will have recourse to their *ulama*, and lo! they will find them to be apes and swine." [3]

Ulama's disservice to Islam

There is almost a consensus of opinion that what was stated about the evil condition of *ulama* had come true in the present age. Writing shortly prior to the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan wrote in his book, *Kashf-ul-Litham*, to this effect, admitting clearly that this condition of the *ulama* could be plainly witnessed at the present time. It is at least certain that the debasement of the *ulama* and the advent of the Messiah are described as contemporaneous events. Equally certain it is that the *ulama* in this age have done the greatest disservice to Islam by wrangling among themselves and wasting all national energy in internal dissensions and not caring in the least for the sufferings of Islam itself. They have entirely neglected their prime duty of upholding the cause of Islam as against the opposing forces and have brought further discredit on it by their narrow-mindedness in fighting among themselves on the most trivial points, thus making themselves and Islam itself, whose champions they are supposed to be, the laughing-stock of the world.[4]

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3. *Kanz-ul-'Ummal*, vol. vii, p. 190.

4. A very severe contest has been raging in the Muslim world over the accent of the "Amen" recited after the *Fatiha* in prayers, the majority holding that it should be pronounced in a low voice, and a small minority, the Wahabis, holding that it should be pronounced loudly. How often has the sacred and serene atmosphere of a congregational prayer been disturbed by the taking up of cudgels to belabour an unfortunate member of the congregation who happened to pronounce the *Amen* aloud! Cases have gone up as far as High Courts of Judicature to determine the right of one section to say their prayers in certain mosques which were built by Muslims of another persuasion. Even this becomes insignificant when one finds that a great struggle is carried on over the pronouncement of the letter *ḍād,* which some read as *dād* and others as *zād,* the real pronunciation lying somewhere midway between the two, and *fatwas* of *kufr* have been given against one another on a matter of which a man possessing a grain of common sense would not take notice.

If these people, when reminded of their duty, turned against the man who was commissioned to lead Islam to triumph and heaped all sorts of abusive epithets upon him, thus hampering the great work which he was to accomplish, he was justified in calling them unworthy sons of Islam, and, in a spiritual sense, the illegitimate offspring of their great ancestors.

12. The Ahmadiyya Movement

I will bring to a close this short study of the life of the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement by considering two more questions — Was he mad? Was he insincere? I have read a book recently written by an anonymous Shi'a writer which ends with the considered view that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a madman. A madman could not build a house or design a plan of the building of a house, and yet we are asked in all seriousness to accept it as a fact that the man who founded a movement, and built up such an important community as the Ahmadiyya, was a madman. To call such a man mad is nothing but madness.

The Ahmadiyya movement as the West sees it

I give a few brief quotations from recent Western writers showing what the Ahmadiyya movement is.

The Moslem World: [1]

> "…they are a very remarkable group in modern Islam, the only group that has purely missionary aims. They are marked by a devotion, zeal and sacrifice that call for genuine admiration… Their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, must have powerful personality." — p. 170
>
> "… all their mental energy is concentrated on painting Islam as upholder of broad, social and moral ideals." — p. 170

1. A Christian Missionary Quarterly. Vol. xxi, no. 11, April 1931, under article *Islam in India Today* by Rev. H. Kraemer, pages 170–171.

"Their vindication and defence of Islam is accepted by many educated Muslims as the form in which they can remain intellectually loyal to Islam." — p. 171

Murray Titus, *Indian Islam:* [2]

"…the Ahmadis are at present the most active propagandists of Islam in the world." — p . 217

"The movement initiated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad occupies a unique position, in relation to both the orthodox party and the rationalistic reformers represented by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his Neo-Mutazilite followers. Ahmad himself declaimed bitterly against the professional *mullas* of Islam, who kept the people in darkness, who had allowed Islam to die of formalism, who had not prevented the division into sects… At the same time, he could not tolerate the rationalizing expositors of Islam, such as Syed Amir Ali and Prof. S. Khuda Bakhsh, who were beginning to throw doubt on the Quran, as a perfect work of Divine revelation." — p. 222

"…here we find the newest and most aggressive forms of propaganda against Christianity which have ever originated, and from here a world-wide programme of Muslim Foreign Missions is being maintained and financed." — p. 229

Whither Islam?: [3]

"This religious movement through its own dynamic force has attracted wide attention and secured followers all over the world." — p. 214, under *India* by Lt. Col. M.L. Ferrar.

2. Murray T. Titus, *Indian Islam,* Oxford University Press, 1930.

3. *Whither Islam? A Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World,* edited by H.A.R. Gibb, 1932.

> "What is of more interest to the outside world than the beliefs of either branch and their relations with the orthodox is the vigorous life and the fervent missionizing character of the movement." — p. 217, *ibid*.
>
> "The doctrine of the Ahmadiyya is of a highly ethical character and it directs itself particularly towards the intellectuals." — p. 288, under *Indonesia* by Prof. C.C. Berg.
>
> "…how movements like the Ahmadiyya, with its strong ethical powers and its no doubt deep religious feelings, are able to exercise a certain influence far beyond what has so far been considered to be the frontiers of Moslem territory." — p. 309, *ibid.*
>
> "To it belongs also the credit for the development of a modern Moslem apologetic which … is far from negligible." — p. 353, by Prof. H.A.R. Gibb.

Islam at the Crossroads: [4]

> "…the movement resolves itself mainly into liberal Islam with the peculiarity that it has definitely propagandist spirit and feels confident that it can make an appeal to Western nations, an appeal which has already been made with some measure of success." — p. 109

Well-organised, intellectual movement

Can any sane person for a moment entertain the idea that a madman could bring to life such a strongly-organised, vigorous and rational movement?

The second question is — was he insincere? Here again I ask the reader to consider if an insincere man could produce such devoted and sincere followers? Insincerity could give birth only to insincerity, and it is the height of folly to call a

4. De Lacy O'Leary, *Islam at the Cross Roads,* Kegan Paul, London 1923.

man insincere who gathers about himself not only devoted and sincere but also intelligent men who are admittedly the best Muslim missionaries today, and who are leading an admittedly intellectual movement. Moreover, the whole course of Ahmad's life from early youth shows that he was devoted to the cause of the propagation of Islam. Again, an insincere man could not but have some ulterior motive, but the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement cannot be shown to have any such motive. After all, what did he gain by this so-called insincerity? He was at the height of his fame when he laid claim to Promised Messiahship, and he sacrificed by this claim the reputation which he had built for himself during half a century. An insincere man would have done his best to retain the fame which he had acquired and the honour in which he was held. Nor did he make any estate for himself. On the other hand, when he was informed that his end was nigh, he at once constituted a society to which he entrusted complete control of management and of finances. He did not care for the acquisition of either wealth or honour, and sincerity marks every step that he took for the building up of the cause of the propagation of Islam, even every word that he wrote. If such a man could be insincere, truly the world must have become devoid of sincere men!

Appendix 1

Obituaries in the Muslim press

We quote below from some obituaries of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that appeared in the Muslim press in India at his death.

1. Mirza Hairat of Delhi was editor of the *Curzon Gazette.* In his obituary of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, he wrote:

> "The services of the deceased, which he rendered to Islam in confrontation with the Christians and the Arya Samajists, deserve the highest praise. He completely changed the flow of the debate, and laid the foundations of a new literature in India.
>
> We admit, not because of our being Muslims but being seekers after truth, that the top most Arya Samaj leader or Christian missionary could not dare open his mouth to confront the late Mirza sahib. The incomparable books which he wrote in refutation of the Arya Samaj and Christian creeds, and the shattering replies he gave to the opponents of Islam, we have not seen any rational refutation of these except that the Aryas have been hurling abuse at the Founder and the teachings of Islam in an uncouth manner, without being able to give a sensible reply. Although the deceased was a Punjabi, yet his pen was so powerful that today in the whole of the Punjab, even in the whole of India, there is no author of such power.… and it is true that, on reading some of his writings, one goes into a state of ecstasy.

> Although he did not receive any regular education in Arabic language, literature or grammar, he gained such a proficiency in Arabic by his God-given intellect and nature that he could write it quite naturally.…
>
> His followers are not only common and unlearned people, but include able and bright graduates, viz., B.A., M.A., and very learned Ulama. It is a matter of no small pride for a religious leader of this day that persons educated on traditional lines as well as persons educated on modern lines, both types, should become his followers. Surviving the heat of predictions of his death, opposition, and criticism, he cleared his way to reach the highest pinnacle of progress."
>
> — *Curzon Gazette,* Delhi, 1st June 1908

2. Maulvi Bashir-ud-Din, editor of *Sadiq-ul-Akhbar,* Rewari (U.P., India), wrote as follows in his obituary:

> "As Mirza sahib, with his forceful speeches and magnificent writings, shattered the foul criticism of the opponents of Islam, silencing them forever and proving that truth is after all the truth, and as he left no stone unturned in the service of Islam by championing its cause to the full, justice requires that one should condole the sudden and untimely death of such a resolute defender of Islam, helper of the Muslims, and an eminent and irreplaceable scholar."
>
> — *Sadiq-ul-Akhbar,* May 1908

3. Maulvi Sayyid Waheed-ud-Din, editor of *Aligarh Institute Gazette,* wrote:

> "The deceased was an acknowledged author and founder of the Ahmadiyya Sect.… He has left eighty writings, twenty of which are in Arabic. Undoubtedly, the deceased was a great fighter for Islam."
>
> — *Aligarh Institute Gazette,* June 1908

4. The editor of the *Lahore Municipal Gazette* wrote:

> "The Mirza sahib was specially renowned for his knowledge and scholarship. His writings were also eloquent. In any case, we are grieved by his death for the reason that he was a Muslim. We believe that a scholar has been taken from the world."
>
> — *Municipal Gazette,* Lahore, 1908

5. The acting editor of a well-known Muslim newspaper, the *Wakeel* of Amritsar, wrote a lengthy tribute, from which we quote extracts below:[1]

> "That man, that very great man, whose pen was a magic wand and whose tongue spell-binding; that man whose brain was a complex of wonders, whose eye could revive the dying and whose call aroused those in the graves, whose fingers held the wires of revolution and whose fists were electrical batteries; that man who for thirty years was an earth-quake and typhoon for the religious world, who, like the trumpet of Doomsday, awakened those lost in the slumber of life, he has left the world empty-handed. This bitter death, this cup of poison, which entrusted the deceased to dust, will remain on thousands, nay millions of tongues, as words of bitter disappointment and regret. The stroke of death which slaughtered, along with one who was very much alive, the hopes and longings of many, and the wails it raises of lament, will remain in memories for a long time to come.
>
> The demise of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sahib of Qadian is not such an event that a lesson should not be learnt from it, nor should it be consigned to the passage of

1. It is thought, but cannot be entirely confirmed, that this acting editor was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who later became a famous Islamic scholar, author and journalist. He also later held high political office in India.

time to efface. Such people who produce a religious or intellectual revolution are not born often. These sons of history, in whom it rightly takes pride, appear but rarely on the world scene, and when they do they bring about a revolution for all to see.

In spite of our strong differences with Mirza sahib in respect of some of his claims and beliefs, his separation for ever has convinced the educated and enlightened Muslims that one of their very great personages has left them. And with him the mighty defence of Islam against its opponents, which was linked with his person, has come to an end. His special characteristic, that he acted against the enemies of Islam as a victorious general, compels us to express openly our feeling that the grand movement which for so long defeated and trod over our opponents should be continued in the future also.

Mirza sahib appeared in the front line of devotees who, for the cause of Islam, accepted the dedication to sacrifice their time from the cradle, through the springs and autumns, to their graves in fulfilling the pledge of loyalty to their beautiful beloved Islam.…

The literature produced by Mirza sahib in his confrontation with the Christians and the Aryas has received the seal of general approval, and for this distinction he needs no introduction. We have to acknowledge the value and greatness of this literature from the bottom of our hearts, now that it has done its work. This is because that time cannot be forgotten nor effaced from the mind when Islam was besieged by attacks on all sides, and the Muslims, who had been entrusted with the defence of Islam by the Real Defender, as the means of defence in this world of causes and means, were lying flat sobbing in the

aftermath of their shortcomings, doing nothing for Islam or not being able to do anything for it.…

Then began that counter-attack from the side of the Muslims in which Mirza sahib had a part. That defence not only shattered to bits the initial influence of Christianity, which it really had due to support from the government, and saved thousands, nay millions, of Muslims from this dangerous attack which would have succeeded, but the talisman of Christianity itself was blown away like smoke.…

So, this service rendered by Mirza sahib will place the coming generations under a debt of gratitude, in that he fulfilled his duty of the defence of Islam by joining the front rank of those engaged in the *jihad* by the pen, and he left behind him as a memorial such literature as will last so long as Muslims have blood flowing in their veins and the urge to support Islam remains their prominent national characteristic. Besides this, Mirza sahib performed a very special service for Islam by crushing the poisonous fangs of the Arya Samaj.… His writings against the Arya Samaj shed clear light on the claim that, however much the scope of our defence may be widened in the future, it is impossible that these writings could ever be overlooked.

Natural intelligence, application and dexterity, and continuous debates, had lent Mirza sahib a special splendour. He had vast knowledge, not only of his own religion, but also of other religions. And he was able to use his vast knowledge with great finesse. In the art of preaching and teaching, he had acquired the accomplishment that the person whom he addressed, of whatever understanding or religion, was thrown into deep thought by his spontaneous reply. India today is an exhibition house of religions, and the number of great and small faiths found here, along with their mutual

> struggles which announce their existence, cannot be matched anywhere else in the world. Mirza sahib's claim was that he was the arbiter and judge for them all, but there is no doubt that he possessed a special talent to make Islam pre-eminent among all these religions. This was due to his natural ability, taste for study, and hard work. It is not likely that a man of this grandeur will be born again in the religious world of the Indian sub-continent, who would devote his highest desires in this way to the study of religions."
>
> — *Wakeel,* Amritsar

6. A few days after the obituary quoted above, the permanent editor of *Wakeel,* Maulana Abdullah Al-Imadi, added his own tribute in this paper as follows:

> "Although Mirza sahib had not received systematic education in current knowledge and theology, yet an assessment of his life shows that he had a unique nature not granted to everyone: by the aid of his own study and his upright nature, he had attained sufficient mastery over religious literature. In about 1877, when he was 35 or 36 years old, we find him charged with unusual religious fervour. He is leading the life of a true and pious Muslim. His heart is unimpressed by worldly attractions. He is as happy in solitude as if he were in congenial company, and when in company he is enjoying the bliss of solitude. We find him restless, and it appears as if he is in search of a lost thing, no trace of which can be found in the mortal world. Islam has so overwhelmed him that he holds debates with the Aryas, and writes voluminous books in support of Islam. His debates in Hoshiarpur in 1886 were so delightful that the feeling of enjoyment has still not been forgotten.…
>
> The state of ecstasy created by reading his invaluable books which were written to counter other religions

> and to uphold Islam, still has not faded. His *Barahin Ahmadiyya* overawed the non-Muslims and raised the spirits of the Muslims. He presented to the world a captivating picture of the religion [of Islam], cleansed of the blots and dust that had collected upon it as a result of the superstition and natural weaknesses of the ignorant. In short, this book raised a loud echo in the world, at least within India, which is still reverberating in our ears. Though some Muslim religious leaders may now pass an adverse verdict on *Barahin Ahmadiyya,* … the best time to pass judgment was 1880 when it was published. At that time, however, Muslims unanimously decided in favour of Mirza sahib.
>
> As to his character, there is not the slightest trace of a blot on it. He lived a virtuous life, the life of a righteous, God-fearing person. To conclude, the first fifty years of his life, in terms of high morals and commendable habits, and in terms of services to the religion, raised him to an enviable position of distinction and honour among the Muslims of India."
>
> — *Wakeel,* Amritsar, 30 May 1908

7. Maulvi Siraj-ud-Din was the editor of the leading Muslim Urdu daily paper, the *Zamindar* of Lahore, at the time of Hazrat Mirza's death. He was the father of the well-known Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan, who himself later became editor of *Zamindar.* Extracts from his obituary of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as published in this paper have already been quoted in chapter 1 of the main body of this book.[2] He wrote:

> "Mirza Ghulam Ahmad sahib was a clerk in the district of Sialkot round about 1860 or 1861. He would be

2. The translations of the same text as given here and as in chapter 1 are worded slightly differently but represent the same original text.

about 22 or 23 years of age at the time. We can say from personal experience that, even in his youth, he was a very virtuous and righteous person. After work all his time was spent in religious studies. He did not much meet people. In 1877 we had the honour of his hospitality at his home in Qadian for one night. In those days too, he was so engrossed in worship and devotion that he conversed little, even with guests.… We have often said, and we again say, that even if his claims were the result of mental pre-occupation, he was innocent of pretence or fabrication.… Scholarly figures such as Maulvi Nur-ud-Din and Maulvi Muhammad Ahsan, and products of modern education such as Khwaja Jamal-ud-Din, B.A., Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., and Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., are among his followers. Though we personally did not have the honour of believing in his claims or revelations, nonetheless we consider him to be a perfect Muslim."

— *Zamindar,* 8 June 1908

Appendix 2

Western views on the Ahmadiyya Movement

Near the close of this book Maulana Muhammad Ali has quoted extracts from the writings of Western scholars on the Ahmadiyya movement and its founder. This Appendix gives some further extracts from more recent Western opinion.

1. In the "New Edition" of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith says of the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore:

> "It has been active in a systematic and effective fashion, chiefly in three overlapping fields: publishing, organised foreign missionary work, and leadership in intellectual modernism (liberalism) in Islam, especially of English-reading Islam. It has produced and circulated throughout the world (chiefly in English and Urdu, but also in a half-dozen and more other European and well over a dozen Asian languages) translations of the Quran, lives of Muhammad, impressive expositions of Islam, many monographs and essays, and innumerable pamphlets. Its foreign missions, in London, Berlin, Indonesia, have been influential…" [1]

1. *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Luzac & Co., London, 1960; under entry *Ahmadiyya*, p. 302, column 2.

2. In the voluminous scholarly work *Religion in the Middle East*,[2] the author of the chapter *The Ahmadis*,[3] James Robson, Emeritus Professor of Arabic at the University of Manchester, includes the following observations about Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad:

> "[in his youth] he spent most of his time studying his own and other religions, showing great distaste for the legal disputes about property which his father urged him to undertake. He was an ardent Muslim who longed for the regeneration of Islam…" — p. 349
>
> "Muslims commonly believe that a reformer is sent at the beginning of each century, and Ghulam Ahmad appeared to some to be the reformer (*mujaddid*) of the fourteenth century. He began to write a voluminous work, *Barahin Ahmadiyya* (Ahmadi proofs), the early parts of which were welcomed by Muslims who read them…" — p. 351
>
> "…to many he was an attractive personality, a persuasive speaker and writer with an appealing message. He held that he had been sent to recall mankind to orthodox Islam … He held that the Quran was unique, much superior to the Bible … He insisted that revelation has not ceased with Muhammad, but was careful to explain that his inspiration was not like that of the Quran." — p. 352

Regarding the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, Lahore, the chapter continues:

> "This party has conducted a vigorous missionary and literary programme. (Khwaja) Kamal-ud-Din came to England and was *imam* of the Woking mosque, editor

2. General Editor, Professor A.J. Arberry, published by Cambridge University Press, 1968.

3. Chapter 19 in vol. 2, pp. 349–362.

> of the *Islamic Review* and author of many books in which he waged a vigorous propaganda against Christianity…
>
> The ideals of the party are stated to be the service of Islam, the unity, defence and propagation of Islam … Its beliefs are the finality of prophethood in Muhammad, the Quran as God's final and perfect book … that all who profess belief in God and His Messenger, whatever their school of thought in Islam, are Muslims, that Ghulam Ahmad is the *mujaddid* of the fourteenth century, and that he stated he laid no claim to prophethood…" — p. 362

3. Freeland Abbott, in his study of the modern history of Islam in Pakistan and in pre-partition India, entitled *Islam and Pakistan,*[4] makes the following comments:

> "In the third part [of *Barahin Ahmadiyya*], published in 1882, Ghulam Ahmad claimed to have received a revelation from God that he was the great reformer of Islam's fourteenth century — the *mujaddid* of his time… Even this does not seem to have disturbed the traditionalist theologians — an indication, perhaps, of the respect with which they accepted his book." — p. 150
>
> "Ghulam Ahmad's efforts were not only defensive; he took the offensive as well, and established an extensive, highly organised missionary enterprise to carry the truths of Islam as he understood them to all parts of the world." — p. 152
>
> "The primary significance of the Ahmadiyya movement lay in its missionary emphasis… The Ahmadiyyas made it part of their principles… to proselytise energetically for Islam…

4. Published by Cornell University Press, U.S.A., 1968.

In the course of time the Ahmadiyya arguments against other religions were wholeheartedly accepted by even their most vociferous [Muslim] critics… Through the vigour of their proselytising and their incessant and highly publicised attacks on Christianity, they instilled a stronger faith in many Muslims. They developed a confident belief that Christianity does not explain the strength of Europe, and that the true religion remained Islam… This is the essential significance of the Ahmadiyya Movement. It is somewhat ironic that the sect most attacked by Muslims in India and Pakistan has also been that which has worked the hardest, in both its branches, to defend and extend Islam against the competition offered by other faiths." — pp. 160, 161

Appendix 3

Maulana Muhammad Ali and Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

First assessments

Shortly after the young Muhammad Ali joined the Ahmadiyya Movement in 1897, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote and published the following opinion about him in an announcement:

> "Among the most sincere friends in our community is Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., who, besides his other qualifications, has also just now passed his law examination. For the past few months, at much loss to his own work, he has been staying with me in Qadian to perform a service to religion by translating some of my writings into English. …
>
> During this period in which he has been with me, I have been observing him, both openly and discreetly, to assess his moral character, observance of religion and goodness of behaviour. So, thanks be to God, that I have found him to be a most excellent man as regards religion and good behaviour in all ways. He is unassuming, modest, of a righteous nature, and pious. He is to be envied for many of his qualities. … It is obvious that such promising young men possessing

> these qualities, who are able and honourable, cannot be found by searching." [1]

Two months later, in another announcement in which Hazrat Mirza mentioned several of the prominent men who had joined the Movement, he writes:

> "I am very happy that another good young man, having found the grace of God, has joined our community, that is Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A., Pleader. I have very good expectations of him. For a long time he has borne a worldly loss in order to stay in Qadian to serve the religion, and is learning the deep knowledge of the Holy Quran from Hazrat Maulvi Nur-ud-Din.
>
> I am sure that my foresight will not go wrong in this, that this young man will make progress in the path of God, and I am sure that by the grace of God he will prove to be so firm in righteousness and love of religion that he will set an example worthy to be followed by his peers. O God, let it be so! *Amen,* again *Amen.*" [2]

In this second announcement, Hazrat Mirza has added here a footnote as follows:

> "All those books of mine which are published after translation into English are translated by Maulvi Muhammad Ali, M.A."

In a letter to the Maulana in this early period, Hazrat Mirza wrote:

> "I hold an extremely favourable opinion about you. This is why I have a special love for you. If your nature had not been pure in the sight of God, I could not possibly have thought so well of you, never. I love

1. Dated 9 August 1899, *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* vol. 3, p. 137, number 206.
2. Dated 4 October 1899, *op. cit.,* vol. 3, p. 157–158, number 208.

> you fervently from the bottom of my heart, and often pray for you in the five daily prayers. I hope that at some future time these prayers will show their effect. … I am busy praying, with heart-felt passion, for your welfare in this world and the hereafter, and your body and soul, and I am awaiting the effects and results of the prayer." [3]

In another early letter to the Maulana, Hazrat Mirza writes:

> "It has long been my intention to divide my community into two groups. One group consists of those who are partly for this world and partly for religion, and are not able to withstand great trials, nor can they render important services to religion. The other group consists of those who enter through this door with full sincerity and faithfulness and in reality sell themselves in this path. I wish that God would include you in the latter group." [4]

In these words Hazrat Mirza has presaged the division of his following into two groups — indeed he has called it his "intention" — one tainted by worldly motives and the other purely devoted to religion, and indicated that Maulana Muhammad Ali will be in the latter group.

Appoints Maulana as editor of the *Review of Religions*

Shortly after Maulana Muhammad Ali decided to devote his life to the cause of the religion, Islam and the Ahmadiyya Movement, and for that purpose came to settle in Qadian in 1899, Hazrat Mirza announced his proposal to start a magazine in English. He wrote:

> "It was always a matter of sadness and anxiety for me that all those truths, the spiritual knowledge, the sound

3. Facsimile of letter published in the Urdu biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Mujahid-i Kabir,* page 50.

4. Letter dated 8 May 1899; facsimile in *Mujahid-i Kabir,* page 32.

> arguments in support of the religion of Islam, and the teachings giving satisfaction to the human soul, which have been disclosed to me and are still being made known to me, have not yet benefited the English-educated people of this country or the seekers-after-truth of Europe. This pain was so intense that it was no longer bearable. But God Almighty intends that, before I pass away from this temporary abode, all my aims should be fulfilled so that my last journey is not one of disappointment.
>
> So to fulfil this object, which is the real purpose of my life, there is a suggestion that … a magazine in English be published for the fulfillment of the objectives mentioned above." [5]

This magazine was started under the title the *Review of Religions* and Hazrat Mirza appointed Maulana Muhammad Ali as its editor. Most of the articles in the magazine were from the pen of the Maulana, many of them being translations of writings of the Promised Messiah. In a very short time this magazine acquired renown, not only in India but abroad as well.

It should be noted that what Hazrat Mirza has called above as *"the real purpose of my life",* he appointed the Maulana for its fulfillment.

The following incident was also recorded and published in Hazrat Mirza's lifetime:

> "The *Review of Religions* was being mentioned. A man praised it and said that its articles were of high quality. Hazrat Mirza said:
>
> 'Its editor Maulvi Muhammad Ali is an able and learned man. He has the M.A. degree, and along with it

5. Announcement dated 15 January 1901, *Majmu'a Ishtiharat,* vol. 3, pages 393–394, number 234.

> a religious bent of mind. He always passed with top marks and his name had gone forward for E.A.C. But leaving all this he has settled here. This is why God Almighty has blessed his writing.' " [6]

Maulana to correct errors in Ahmadiyya publications

There were two Ahmadiyya community newspapers published in Urdu, *Al-Hakam* and *Al-Badr* (later called just *Badr*), which reported what Hazrat Mirza said during his daily conversations in gatherings of his followers, friends and visitors. An incident is recorded as follows concerning the publication of his speeches and spoken statements in these newspapers:

> "The holy Hazrat called in the editors of *Al-Hakam* and *Al-Badr* and emphasized to them that they must be very careful in writing down his speeches, in case something got misreported by mistake, which would then be used by the critics in their support. … So (added Hazrat Mirza) 'it is proper that before publishing such articles in your newspapers you should show them to Maulvi Muhammad Ali. You will benefit by this, and also people will be saved from error.' " [7]

This shows that the Promised Messiah had the fullest confidence in Maulana Muhammad Ali as correctly understanding his views and teachings, so much so that he should be asked to check if some statement or belief was being wrongly ascribed to the Promised Messiah.

Wants people like Muhammad Ali to be produced

The Promised Messiah highly valued the services of Maulana Muhammad Ali and regarded them as unique, so much so that once he said:

> "I wish that such people could be produced who would

6. On 7th November 1906. *Ruhani Khaza'in No. 2,* vol. 9, page 90.

7. On 2nd November 1902. *Ruhani Khaza'in No. 2,* vol. 4, page 159.

> do the kind of work that Maulvi Muhammad Ali is doing. There is no certainty of life, and he is all alone. One cannot see anyone who can assist him or take his place." [8]

Appoints him secretary of the Anjuman's executive

In early 1906, by means of his published will and testament entitled *Al-Wasiyya*, Hazrat Mirza created an executive body, called the *Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya,* to be the supreme ruling body in the Ahmadiyya Movement after him, which he described as his "successor". Later he wrote:

> "…after my lifetime, the decision of this Anjuman in all matters shall be final." [9]

He appointed the Maulana as the Secretary of the Anjuman, its chief administrative officer.

According to the rules of the Anjuman, as prescribed by Hazrat Mirza, it would have full control over all the finances of the Movement. He wrote in his booklet *Al-Wasiyya:*

> "The Anjuman, which is to hold these funds, shall not be entitled to spend the monies for any purpose except the objects of the Ahmadiyya Movement, and among these objects the propagation of Islam shall have the highest priority."

This shows the sovereign power that Hazrat Mirza gave to the body whose secretary he appointed Maulana Muhammad Ali.

Gives pen to the Maulana

The Promised Messiah also regarded the Maulana as the inheritor of his knowledge, who would spread in the world the spiritual truths taught by him. In November 1906, a dream was

8. *Ruhani Khaza'in No. 2,* vol. 8, page 270.

9. Handwritten note dated 27 October 1907.

related by Hazrat Mirza in which he saw Maulvi Abdul Karim, one of his leading followers who had died earlier, bring him a gift of a device consisting of a tube with a pen attached at the end, enabling the pen to be used easily without effort. Hazrat Mirza then relates that the following took place in the dream:

> "I said: 'I did not send for this pen'. Maulvi [Abdul Karim] *sahib* replied: 'Maulvi Muhammad Ali must have sent for it'. I said I would give it to him." [10]

This pen came from heaven, as it was brought by a great disciple of Hazrat Mirza who had died, and Hazrat Mirza passed it on to Maulana Muhammad Ali. This signifies that Hazrat Mirza passed on to the Maulana the religious knowledge that he received from God and handed to him the task of broadcasting it to the world. Hazrat Mirza's saying "I did not send for this pen" signifies that he himself would not be using it. And so it was that Maulana Muhammad Ali wielded this pen to produce legendary writings such as his English and Urdu commentaries of the Quran. The feature of the pen mentioned in the dream, that it could be used to write profusely without effort, was also clearly fulfilled in the prolific nature of the writings authored by the Maulana.

Directs the Maulana to write a book about Islam

It was reported in the Ahmadiyya newspaper *Badr* during the life of the Founder that on 13 February 1907 he called in Maulana Muhammad Ali and said to him:

> "I want to fulfil the duty of the propagation of Islam to the Western people by having an English book written, and this is your work. The reason why Islam today is not spreading in those countries, and if someone does become a Muslim he is very weak, is that those people do not know the truth about Islam, nor has it been presented to them. It is their right that they should be

10. *Al-Hakam,* 17 November 1906, front page.

> shown the true Islam which God has made manifest to me.… All those arguments that God has taught me to prove Islam to be true should be collected together in one place. If a comprehensive book of this kind is compiled, it is hoped that people would benefit from it greatly." [11]

The Maulana eventually performed the great service of writing such a book in the form of *The Religion of Islam,* first published in 1936. In the preface of this book he mentions that Hazrat Mirza had asked him to write such a book:

> "…the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, had charged me with the writing of an English book which should contain all that was necessary for a Muslim, or a non-Muslim, to know about the religion of Islam, and to give a true picture of the religion which was largely misrepresented."

This book was received with acclaim by many famous Islamic writers and reviewers. It prompted the following opening words in his review by Marmaduke Pickthall:

> "Probably no man living has done longer or more valuable service for the cause of Islamic revival than Maulana Muhammad Ali of Lahore." [12]

Further on in this review, Pickthall wrote:

> "Such a book is greatly needed at the present day when in many Muslim countries we see persons eager for the reformation and revival of Islam, making mistakes through lack of just this knowledge."

This is independent confirmation that the Maulana's book corrected the generally prevailing misconceptions about Islam,

11. *Ruhani Khaza'in No. 2,* vol. 9, pages 191–192.

12. *Islamic Culture,* Hyderabad, India, October 1936, page 659.

which was a chief objective laid down by Hazrat Mirza when he directed the Maulana to write such a book.

It can be seen that Hazrat Mirza handed to the Maulana one of the most important duties of his mission — the presentation of Islam to the West in English in one comprehensive book — telling him *"this is your work",* and the Maulana was able to fulfil this duty to the highest standard.

English translation of the Holy Quran

In 1891, some five or six years before Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and Maulana Muhammad Ali had first met, Hazrat Mirza had published his book *Izala Auham,* in which he had expressed his heart-felt desire to prepare and send an English translation of the Quran to Western countries. He wrote:

> "…I wish to prepare a commentary of the Holy Quran which should be sent to them [the Western nations] after it has been rendered into the English language. I cannot refrain from stating clearly that this is my work, and that no one else can do it as well as I or he who is an offshoot of mine and thus is included in me." [13]

Here he declares that the person who does this work would be "an offshoot of mine and thus included in me". It was Maulana Muhammad Ali who did this work, starting it in 1909, one year after the death of Hazrat Mirza, and publishing it eight years later. Not only was it hailed by many independent reviewers at that time as a marvellous, unequalled work, but even up to today, after the appearance of other translations by Muslims, this translation and commentary is still considered as surpassing all others in scholarship and quality. Another respect in which the Maulana's English work excels all others is that it has spawned translations in several other languages such as Dutch, German, French, Spanish and Russian.

13. *Izala Auham,* page 773.

Therefore the Maulana's translation and commentary has quite clearly fulfilled Hazrat Mirza's bold prediction in the above quotation that it would be entirely impossible for anyone else to do this work as he could or one who was his branch. It follows that Maulana Muhammad Ali clearly meets the above description, "an offshoot of mine and thus is included in me", and his life and work were thus a continuation of the life and work of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

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